



請別告訴我
這是三國正史

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Chapter 1: Don't tell me this is the Oath of the Peach Garden

"Un? This is..."

A fan?

Just when I was tidying up clutter in the house out of boredom, I happened to find a feather fan.

Though I didn't know where it came from, I could feel that this fan was not normal from looking at the scattered feather fragments.

"Dad~~~ What is this? Is it a lucky draw prize?" I took the fan to the hall.

"Ah? What is it?" Dad frowned as he continued looking at the football channel on the television without bothering to look over, "Doesn't matter what it is! If you have free time why don't you go study instead. Don't forget you will be a high school senior next year and your results are still so average..."

Dad continued on, but I had left long ago.

Really, when did he become so long-winded.

Un?

Something caught my eye. I found that the fan had... Un? Why is there a

piece of paper here?

The piece of paper was very old and felt like it would disintegrate if I touched it.

I carefully pulled it out.

“Return, to, owner?”

There were only these words written in large fonts on the piece of paper. I looked at the title of the paper– <The Essential Art of Great Peace> <The Way of Heaven>

What is this?

...

Un? Why do I feel faint?

Wu!

All of a sudden, I felt an acute pain that started at my heart and went up to my brain, which hurt so much I fell to the ground, unable to move.

Haa, haa, I can't breathe.

My life, ends here.

Just then, the floor disappeared and I fell through.

Ah!~~~~

"What is with this screaming you idiot!!!!"

"Ouch."

A voice and pain that appeared out of nowhere pulled me back to reality.

"Ah..." A pint-sized girl appeared in front of me as I slowly opened my eyes.

Who is she?

I asked out loud, and touched my chest. But strangely, it did not hurt anymore.

"You don't need to be so surprised actually. Why did you act up so violently just from looking at the notice." The girl seemed to feel like she said too much when she saw my innocent look. She scratched the back of her head, walked over and reached out her hand, "Can you get up?"

"Ah... Ah, yes I can." I felt a little uncomfortable, but I could move fine.

"Un, doesn't look like too much of a problem." She sized me up, "Though you are a little short, but your body is quite sturdy eh."

I don't want to be called short by a little girl.

I thought, looking at the girl. She was shorter than me by 2 heads, with

smooth, flowing black hair that stopped at her shoulders, green energetic eyes and she was wearing... A tunic? Perhaps wearing ancient clothing is a recent trend...

Wait...

Speaking of which, where is this place?

I looked around and found that there were short and small houses about. The people who were walking about were all unfamiliar faces. To be clearer, this is definitely not a part of my house.

"Ah, little girl– Ouch!!"

This little lady kicked my elbow.

"Don't call me a little girl, I'm already 16."

"Hai~~~~– Ouch!!"

Don't step on me as well okay?

"A complete look of disbelief..."

"You think too much." I steeled my glance and lied, "Wait, leave that aside, can I ask where is this?"

"... Ha?" When she heard me finish, she tiptoed and touched my forehead. Having her face come right up close all of a sudden, I wasn't able to react, "Are you sick? Is this not the Zhuo county?"

"And, and so," I pushed her hand aside, "Where is Zhuo county? And why am I holding a feather fan..."

Feather fan?

"... Ah!!!!– Ouch!!"

"Why are you always yelling?"

I didn't bother replying, and stared at the fan in a daze.

If I wasn't wrong, this situation was because of the fan... Impossible is what common sense says but there is no other possibility.

The paper? Where is the piece of paper?

"Oi, what are you looking for?"

Gone?

... So it's that then? I can't return? God played a prank on me?

"No way!!!– Ouch!"

"Stop yelling and getting shocked! Weirdo!" She pulled my collar, "Leave all of that aside, see this first."

"I don't have the mood..." As I said that, I saw the girl's face which had

turned serious, and did not continue.

"Notice?" I muttered and looked at the board in front.

I looked at where she was looking, and there was indeed a notice. For some reason, it was all in ancient characters and I didn't know too much. But there were some words I could pick out.

Army recruitment by Liu Yan, Administrator of You state?

A-re? What is the feeling of familiarity...

"Ah, excuse me lit... lady what is your name?"

"Me?"

"Un."

"Why are you asking my name all of a sudden? What a weirdo... But it's not like it's something that can't be said." She released me and waved her hand as she spoke before introducing herself, "My name is Zhang Fei, courtesy name Yi De... What is with that look, I know that name isn't a girl's name okay."

I was completely stunned, as I looked at the girl who called herself "Zhang Fei".

"No no no," The problem wasn't that, the problem was, "... Zhang Fei is actually a girl! -Ouch!!"

"Where did you hear that I'm not a girl? Who doesn't know that I'm not a

girl in a 10 mile radius?!"

"But... But..."

This is way too ridiculous.

Looking at the notice, I had an ominous feeling but I didn't expect it to be true. Though the sexual difference was there from the start.

But I really was in the era of the Three Kingdoms.

"Oi, you still haven't answered my question! What do you think of this..."

"That sort of thing doesn't matter!!" I had no leisure to mind this, "Let me tel, you I have no time to bother about what administrator of You state, that guy can't live for long anyway as his idiot of a son will ruin his household."

"Un? How do you know all this?"

Ah... I forgot, I had transferred. In such a situation, should I be more careful talking about things that haven't happened?

"... This, this sort of thing, you can reach that conclusion after a little bit of thinking right?"

"Oh~~~~"

Zhang Fei let out a sigh of admiration as I finished. It really is a big help that she did not ask further.

"So forget the notice, as for you, you can go do whatever you want, I--"

"Un un, you're leading?"

"Ah?" Her unexpected words made me unable to speak for a moment before I frantically waved my hands, "No what I mean is--"

I must refuse.

"That's good. You being the leader is good. Though you are a weirdo, you seem very impressive." As she finished, she tiptoed and patted my shoulders and continued in a serious tone, "I like you, it's decided. From now on, I shall follow you."

"Nononono."

No, I must explain it clearly.

"Listen to me," I pushed her hands away, and gripped her shoulders to show my seriousness and looked her in the eyes, "Actually-- Ouch!"

"You, what are you doing?" She was a bit flustered as she retracted her hand, her face showing a hint of red shyness.

"As I was saying!" My patience had reached its limits and my voice was loud. "I'm telling you, I only want to go home and nothing else!"

"Oi~~~~~" A villager from behind called out, "Your mother is dying!!"

"Ah?"

Mother?

"Oh, so that's what you meant." She had a look that was as if she understood my intentions, "Let's go back quickly, I'll go with you!"

"..."

There's no way I'm going to explain through this!

After returning home, my, or rather Liu Bei's mother was lying there dying. Though I really wanted to explain myself, I felt that it was better not to say such things with an elderly person at death's door.

After mother said all that she wanted, she gave out. By right I should be crying my eyes out but with an old person I had met for the first time, I can't force my tears out like that. All I could do was show my sadness on my face as I walked out of the house.

"You really are kind huh."

Un?

I looked back and found that Zhang Fei had followed me.

"I now understand why you wanted to go home that much, you really are a filial son." Her look was overflowing with kindness.

"Actually that isn't what I meant." But I also didn't know how to speak the truth at this time.

"But now that your mother has passed, you shouldn't have any worries."

Worries huh~ I do have a lot about my present circumstances.

I squatted on a rock in the grass, and stared at the feather fan in a daze.

"... Can you believe it? I don't even know that old lady."

"Haha, I understand, it's good to forget." She really is good at twisting my words, "May, may I please ask for your full name?"

From the looks of it, she probably doesn't speak politely very often. Really, if you aren't used to it, then no need to force yourself...

"Hai~~~~" I gave a long sigh because I just knew it would go like that. So I decided to resist it a little, "Perhaps at this time I should be saying 'My name is Liu Bei Liu Xuan De' but really I'm not, my name is--"

(TL: Xuan De is the courtesy name)

... A-re? What was my name again?

"Oh~ Liu Bei huh~~~~ It's a nice name."

"No, I'm--"

What's going on? Why is only "Liu Bei" appearing in my brain when I'm not Liu Bei? What is this, memory control?

"Liu Xuan De right??"

"... Forget it, call me whatever you like."

I gave up and accepted it.

In such a situation, there was no need to say so much unnecessary things.

"Good, I'll call you Xuan De from now on, and you can call me Yi De." The girl smiled, "Let's go have a drink at the inn and discuss our grand plans from now on."

I had no intention to embark on any grand plans.

So said my heart but I was unable to stop her at all. She smiled and dragged me to the inn by my sleeve. Only then I found that she had a clump of hair tied up and floated behind her as she walked.

"Boss, give us a pot of wine!" Yi De yelled out in a terrifyingly loud voice as she entered. She then found a table and sat down.

"Alright~~"

In no time at all, wine was served to the table.

"I don't drink."

"Ma ma ma, just one sip."

"Oh... So bland!"

Doesn't this taste like the rice wine which is used to cook fish?

(TL: Some sort of ingredient used to make fish. Pretty sure it's not very alcoholic as I ate it as a child... Or not.)

"Oh~~ Looks like you are a guy with heavy tastes. *Gudong*, ha~~~" Yi De downed her cup.

... Drinking this much should be fine for this kind of wine right.

But now isn't the time for me to be thinking about this.

I looked about, trying to find a 2m tall red-faced big man. If I wasn't wrong, this should be the place of that scene, and Guan Yu should be coming. To prevent this plot from advancing further, I must avoid that person no matter what. But I haven't seen him...

Strands of red string floated by, and went past my nose.

"Ah... Ah... Achoo!!"

I sneezed suddenly, perhaps because of the stimulation from the red strings.

"Oi, the one sitting behind there! Your hair is causing trouble." Yi De said when she saw this, what a frank and outspoken person.

"Ah? Oh, sorry, my hair is a bit long." A girl's voice came from behind.

"Ah, it's okay it's okay." I turned my head and waved it off.

This person was about my height, and had really long hair, and it was even a rare red colour. She had silver eyes that had a bright light in them but she was unsmiling and looked like a very serious person.

"Looking at you, you're not a local right." Yi De asked on seeing her hair.

"Ah, indeed I am not. I came from the north." The girl said, "I saw the army recruitment notice when I came into the city today and I have decided to join."

(TL: No no no, it doesn't matter what part of China you come from! Unless you mean Russia, there's no way a Chinese has red hair and silver eyes!)

"Ah? Speaking of which, girls can join the army now?"

I suddenly thought of a very important question.

"Why not?" That girl looked at me like I was an outdated and ancient person, "Women have had equal status with men since the Shang Dynasty."

(TL: That's 1600 BC by the way, and unlike Japan which has long periods in history where men and women were equal in status, China has always been largely male dominated.)

"..."

If my memory is correct, it was the 19th century womens' rights movements that started in Western countries that gave equal status... Maa, it's not like these people would know anyway.

"Oi, how about you join us." Yi De asked the girl, "This man doesn't only look silly, he is quite the visionary~~ He has already predicted that the You state idiot will definitely meet with ruin."

"Oh~~~ Please tell me your full name."

"I am..."

Ah!! I really did forgot my real name.

"His name is Liu Bei, you can just call him Xuan De. You?"

Why did you help me say it?

"Ah, I haven't said mine yet huh. I apologise." She stood up straight and said, "My name is Guan Yu and my courtesy name is Yun Chang. Please just call me Yun Chang."

"..."

Ah?!!

"You... You are Guan Yun Chang?!"

"That is me... Is there a problem?"

"But... No, no problem."

Zhang Fei is already a girl, having Guan Yu be a girl as well isn't too strange.

"Haa, he really is quite weird huh."

"I'll say."

They both nodded in agreement.

It's not me that's weird, it's this world!

I didn't think Guan Yu would be a girl as well, now the story will—

"Alright, let's become sworn siblings."

"How did it develop so quickly?!"

"Not at all, any later and the war will be over! How then can we serve the Imperial Court?"

"Un, I agree with Yi De."

Yun Chang nodded at the side.

"Speaking of which, you're joining just like that?"

"Maa, where ever I go, it's the same, joining the army. In which case, why not be together with some people I can really get along with. Won't that be much better."

Really get along with... All we did just now was say a few words and sneeze once right?

Just like that, I was half dragged, half pushed and we 3 ended up at Zhang Fei's house.

According to age, Yi De was the youngest and though I was the same age as Yun Zhang, I was born slightly earlier so I was the eldest.

"The Xuan De is the big brother, Yun Zhang is the second sister and I am the third sister.

... That sounds so weird.

After we swore our oath and prepared the altar, we lit up joss sticks.

"Speaking of which, who do we pray to?" Yi De asked.

"Wouldn't it normally be Guan Gong?" I suggested.

(TL: Another way of calling Guan Yu.)

"Why pray to me?!" Yun Chang naturally opposed this as she laughed.

"Then pray to this." I gave up and placed the fan on the altar, "It's all

thanks to this that I'm in a strange place like here."

"Oh, then so it is then."

"Un."

You 2 don't seem to care at all what it is we pray to.

Hai~~~ Though I am happy to have 2 beauties at my sides, but I really can't get fired up at all.

I continued the ritual and oath with a bad taste in my heart and prayed.



Chapter 2: Don't tell me this is considered being prepared

"Alright, with that, that's done." Yi De said as she stretched her neck.

"Un, I thought the form was simple, the meaning behind it is deep huh." Yun Chang said as she flicked her long red hair.

Though I feel like the meaning behind it was not very deep, perhaps there is much importance of the Oath as a key historical event.

I looked at the 2, and felt an inexplicable feeling of emptiness.

"Now then, what's next?"

Don't tell me, we are going to consummate this relationship?

I held up the feather fan tiredly and stared at the surface but naturally no sign came forth.

About the era of the Three Kingdoms, personally I don't know all that much. Most of my knowledge comprises of bits and pieces here and there. From what I've seen so far, whether or not I am Liu Bei, I'm afraid that understanding history won't bring too much benefits.

"Hnn hnn~~ About our next course of action, I have already thought of it long ago!" Chang Fei held her hip and proudly raised her head, "Though I look like this, my family is actually quite rich yo~"

"Un, I see."

"Ah... So?"

Yun Chang seemed to understand but I didn't know what conclusion to arrive at from that.

"That is to say, there is nothing to worry about when it comes to recruiting troops and buying horses, big brother."

(TL: In the actual Three Kingdoms, Liu Bei received sponsorship from a couple of rich merchants for his initial ventures.)

Ah, so that's what she meant.

"But what you said is far too simplistic," I shook my head.

It's not that I want to be a wet blanket but the truth is like that.

"Having funds is good, but how will we recruit people? With just the 3 of us, who would be willing to listen?"

"Big brother's words are right," Yun Chang who seemed to understand the difficulty of the matter at hand said as she held her chin and frowned, "Moreover, even if we do manage to recruit people, in such a small county town, we can't find the equipment for several hundred people right?"

Un...

Both I and Yun Chang sank into deep thought.

"That's why," Yi De said as a matter of factly, "That sort of thing, if we just leave it to big brother, won't it be alright?"

"Ah?" I was bewildered, "Leave it to me?"

When did I ever have the ability to be a grand marshal? I'm only 17.

"No no no, I can't."

I hastily tried to shirk the responsibility she threw onto me.

"Big brother can definitely do it!"

I have no idea where she found that confidence from.

But no matter what I must dispel this notion from Yi De.

"Yi De, what I want to say is--"

"Oi~~~~ Everyone!! My big brother has something to tell everyone, please do listen!!~~~~"

"You really don't listen to what I say at all huh..."

Seeing the figure of Yi De running out happily, tears streamed down my face.

"Don't cry big brother, third sister means well with this."

"Are you sure this isn't called being reckless?"

"... Maa, we did just meet so we don't know her too well."

"Doesn't that apply to me as well..."

Unfortunately, time did not pity me, and without much effort, over a hundred people had gathered in Yi De's courtyard. Why are they so free, was there too much labour supply in the village?

I sat on a makeshift stage with my 2 sisters and looked down to the bustling crowd below. Though there were only several hundred people, I have never had to give a speech in front of so many people in school.

Before I could even begin, the people below had already begun to greet me and offer encouragement.

"Young man, good luck."

"He's always been a good boy, and so filial to boot. As expected, he is destined to do big things."

"Un, the straw shoes he makes are so cheap and durable too."

(TL: The actual Liu Bei was a straw shoe weaving villager before he rose an army.)

"Ah... Thanks, thanks everyone..."

I can't believe so many people have expectations of me. The Liu Bei before me, you really are a great help.

"Alright! Everyone quiet down, we are going to start." 'Go, big brother' Yi De whispered to me, and forcefully pulled me to the front of the stage.

'Big brother, good luck." Yun Chang encouraged me softly.

Ah!! I just have to shameless about it!

"Ah, my name is Liu... Liu Bei, probably someone from this county. Some of you may know me, some of you may not, but now I stand before you hoping you will know me."

What the fuck, what bullshit am I spouting!!

"I gathered everyone here today for the sake of discussing the matters of the Imperial Court. Do you see everyone, the officials these days are wicked and corrupted, and with the Yellow... Yellow Turban Rebellion, as subjects of the Imperial Court, we have... Have a duty to contribute to our nation."

No way what is all this lousy talk! Even I am not convinced by myself!

"To... Today, I stand here. To incite and awaken everyone's spirits, ah... The spirit of warriors."

I really can't continue, what sort of shame play is this ahhhh ~~~

(TL: If what he said sounds incoherent to you, it's intentional. Not bad writing nor is it my translation (I hope).)

... A-re? Why is everyone below all silent?

I looked down and several hundred pairs of eyes were glued to me, as if they were waiting on my every word.

Is this for real? To think I got their attention with this much, could it be that the people of this era are all very simple-minded? ... Alright, then I'll just go at it with all I got.

"What does one mean by an individual? What does one mean by the world? What does one mean by the people? I believe that the core of the world is the people, that an individual is to be an example for the people, and that the duty of the people is to save the world. I do not represent the people, rather the opposite. I am only an individual, and everyone here represents the people. I will be an example for everyone, but in the end you all are the basis by which the world can be saved. So please, lend me your strength, for I am but a single commoner, so that we may save all the wretched in this world."

(TL: I couldn't find a reference for this speech and did the best I could to capture the original meaning and retain a grandiose feel in English but I probably failed ORZ.)

If I knelt down at this time, it would be perfect but I was not thick-skinned enough and bowed deeply instead.

It was silent below but in the next second—

HUOOOOO!!~~~~

The whole courtyard erupted in cheers, everyone's face was filled with energy and they all looked at me with respect.

Though everyone's reaction was positive, but if they were genuinely moved by my speech that was intended to incite, I really feel uncomfortable inside... No good, my guilt is overflowing.

"Ah~~~ What a rousing speech, my tears just won't stop." Yi De was rubbing tears from her eyes that were a little red from crying.

"Yes, I never imagined that big brother would be exactly as little sister said at the start. More than that, he is truly a compassionate and righteous person. Yun Chang is really impressed." Yun Chang bowed to me as she said so.

"Please don't be like that, and you 2 aren't supposed to be taken by those words..."

My speech were my true feelings however. I was just an ordinary 17 year old youth, where would you find a 17 year old youth with the actual appetite to support the world? In the end, I really need to depend on everyone's strength to make it work.

But before I end up having to handle the world, I must think of how to get back.

"Alright, all those willing to join us come here and sign your name." Yi De was really quick on her feet, to have progressed to the next step... Looks like she was sure of the success of my speech from the beginning.

I glanced over, and saw that all those who listened to me before were all queueing up and there were people from both sexes.

I felt assured but also pressured because these people had chosen to believe me, an ordinary youngster younger than most of them, and that was because of my words.

And I, who has no background in military affairs, am now confronted with having to lead them through the next difficult task.

As for the next step–

“Yun Chang, we now have troops. But what do we do about horses and equipment.”

“Un, I’ve been thinking about that.” Yun Chang said helplessly, “The only thing we can do is to buy as much as we can, and where lacking have everyone prepare their own supplies and weapons. We aren’t an official unit after all, so there’s no way we can have everyone wear the same uniform, and can only have everyone make some sort of symbol on their clothes.”

“Un, we can only do that.”

“If it’s equipment we are talking about, I know someone.” Yi De said as she poked her head out from the crowd.

And she really did...

Yi De dispersed the crowd at the agreed time and brought us to a shop in the town.

“Zhang Shi Ping and Su Shuang, we are all good sisters right.” Yi De said as she seized 2 girls who were like little sheep.

“Ah... Yes.”

“Maa, maa.”

Looks like they are the shopkeepers...

“That’s right that’s right,” Yi De slapped their backs, “Since that’s the case then sell me your horses and steel ingots eh.”

“... Alright, the price shall be whatever you say.” The 2 girls said helplessly.

“Hahaha, thanks eh. Don’t worry, I won’t be too miserly.” In contrast, Yi De was laughing heartily and went off to see the horses and steel ingots.

... Isn’t this coercion?

As I watched her leave, I walked over to the 2 girls who were about Yi De’s size.

“About that, you 2, I’m really sorry.” I went up and bowed as I apologised.

The 2 looked at me, then looked at each other, before bursting into laughter.

“The ones who should say sorry should be us.”

“Eh?” I didn’t understand and the 2 began to explain on seeing my expression.

“We go way back. Every time Yi De buys something, she always acts like she is coercing us into a transaction but in actual fact her prices are

higher than what we usually charge.”

“Though we accepted her high prices, we do not compromise at all on quality and have always given her the very best.”

“Hai~~~” I sighed in amazement, she really was a good girl huh.

“As expected, being sworn siblings with you 2 was the correct decision.” Yun Chang, who had just been silently smiling at the side until now, suddenly said. “Big brother has a big heart, is compassionate, kind and poetic. And though little sister may be a bit reckless, but she is honest, virtuous and is a true brother. People like the 2 of you are rare in recent times.”

(TL: It sucks that there is no true translation of 义气 in English.)

“Maa, that’s a bit of an overstatement.”

I laughed embarrassedly, and thought of the society I lived in and felt like it was a little ironic.

“Can I ask what kind of weapons you would like?”

After the horses were settled, we brought the steel ingots to a blacksmith. Apart from plate armour, we had to find a suitable weapon for us.

“Ah, the mightiest type of weapon, best if it’s the kind that can pierce and stab. It’s okay if it’s a little heavy.”

“A glaive, a large bladed polearm would be good. It’s okay if it’s a little heavy.”

"As for me... As expected it will be twin swords... As light as possible."

The blacksmith looked at me as I said so, before proceeding to craft the weapons.

Ah, I hate conforming to settings. While choosing anything probably wouldn't matter, I feel like it wouldn't be Liu Bei without twin swords. And thought these 2 people might have different sexes from their originals, they still chose their signature Green Dragon Crescent Blade and Serpent Spear.

"Speaking of which, what about plate armour? Are you 2 not wearing some plate?"

"I'm fine in my usual clothes, plate will only weigh me down."

"As for me, because of my breasts, plate isn't too suitable." Yun Chang awkwardly looked at her... Un, definitely not suitable for plate. "So, so I'm going to wear coat armour, but I don't know what colour would be good."

"What's the difficulty there?" I pointed to some cloth in the blacksmith, "How about that green, that looks good, no?"

Since when does Guan Yu not wear green?

"Green... Huh." Yun Chang thought for a moment and stoked her long hair before she broke into a smile. "Azure green symbolises loyalty, I like that. Thanks for the suggestion big brother."

"Maa, as long as you like it."

This is the first time I knew that azure green has that sort of meaning.

"Since it's what big brother chose for me, then I will wear this green for life and follow big brother." Yun Chang blushed and bowed to hide it from me.

Yun Chang really takes formalities seriously, maa, it's also fine that way.

Speaking of which...

"Speaking of which, you 2 know martial arts right? How did you all learn it?"

"Eh?"

"Martial arts?"

Un? What's the matter?

"I've never learnt martial arts before?" Yi De said as she bent her head to the side.

"Neither have I, I sold dates before this." Yun Chang also had a perplexed look on her face.

"Then... That is to say you don't know how to fight at all?" I rubbed my tightened eyebrows.

Nod nod.

“Then why do you all want such heavy weapons!!”

“...”

“...”

They both looked me in the eye.

““Because if it’s too light, we can’t carry it.””

“Haa?”

I really didn’t understand what was going on.

Only later then I would find out. In this era, to give customers face, and also for customers who want to hide their strength, the standard business practice is to take the opposite meanings of light and heavy when taking orders.

... Now I know why the blacksmith looked at me strangely.

Chapter 3: Don't tell me this is the battle with the Yellow Turban Army

"So, so heavy..." The next morning, I tried wielding the weapons after they were finished but gave up quickly, "Speaking of which, why didn't you all stop me then!"

"Maa, I thought big brother was really amazing."

On what basis do you all think I'm amazing huh~~~

"Big brother use this first for now, there is no time to re-craft a weapon." Yun Chang swung her glaive about clumsily, in an obviously untrained manner.

"I keep feeling like my weapon isn't as impressive as big sister's, and it feels so long." Yi De said, feeling a little timid as she looked at the long spear that was much taller than herself.

Though their weapons weren't weighing 41kg or something, they probably can't be considered light anyway.

(TL: In the original, Guan Yu's weapon is said to have weighed 41kg. Guan Yu is one of those outrageous "ikkitousen" or "fighting a thousand as one" kind of character, and is one of the strongest in Three Kingdoms fiction.)

As for my twin swords, it's almost as if I were wielding the Green Dragon Crescent Blade in my left hand and the Serpent Spear in my right.

Honestly, I can't even swing them and it's hard to walk just hanging them at my waist... Forget it, I'll just hang them on the horse later, all I need to hold is the feather fan.

"Alright, there's no time left. Let's head to the gathering point and distribute the equipment and weapons. Those who really don't get any will just have to inscribe some symbol like we said before." Yun Chang said as she looked toward the sky.

"Un, let's go. I sold my villa and got quite a bit of money so our military expenses should be covered for a while."

"Oh, oh."

In my heart, I was still very troubled as I felt that if we were to set off the route to going back would get further and further. And I was clearly not of this era, but yet this era granted me a role. I really don't know why, and cannot understand it.

But whatever the case, I'll go along for now. The things in the future will be left to the me in the future. The time to stop advancing is at least not now.

"Speaking of which..." I got up the horse with some difficulty and rode with them (they know how to ride horses for some reason) at the front of our contingent, "Where are we going?"

"Un? Aren't we going to kill the Yellow Turban rebels?"

"Maa, that's true." I looked at the boundless wilderness, "But where are they?"

"..."

"Probably- There." Yi De pointed to a random direction.

"Yi De, you must take responsibility for what you say."

"Wu..." As expected, she had nothing to say to that.

I really was an idiot! Why did I not think of this? The enemy is not like the AI in games, they won't pop out after walking through the grass patch. In this era, besides some important cities, isn't everywhere else wilderness? Where am I going to find the enemies?

On top of that, we have several hundred freshly minted troops following behind with no morale, no training and no formation. If we keep wandering around aimlessly like this, they will revolt sooner or later.

"What do we do now?" Yun Chang asked as she stroked her hair.

"Un, at least we must not let everyone know we have no destination in mind."

This was the only thing I could think of for now.

"So... So shameful!!"

"Yun Chang don't be so loud! What if they hear us."

Ah~~~ As expected this is reality, not a light novel. Really, things don't come so easy eh~~~ In light novels, the characters seem to be equipped with martial skills, are adept with strategy, and are able to command

armies so fights and battles are easy affairs. But when it comes to reality, it isn't like that at all, even having a few hundred people stand in line is already difficult, let alone when it comes to several tens of thousands. "Why don't we stop first and see if we can ask some passersby." Yi De said lazily.

"And ask what? 'Do you know where the Yellow Turban Army is? We are going to destroy them' is it? Don't you feel that's a bit too shameful~~~" I looked around again, "Speaking of which, there isn't a single person around? Where are we now?"

Really, there's no road signs at all.

"I seem to have passed through here before..." Yun Chang folded her arms, supporting her breasts, as she sank into thought. "If I'm not wrong, then this should be the road to Zhuo commandery."

(TL: Liu Bei lived in Zhuo county, which is part of Zhuo commandery. County is sort of like a township or a village, and commandery is like a prefecture. So it's kind of like New York, New York.)

"Whatever wherever, let's just go first." Yi De seemed to be irritated.

There really wasn't any other way, and I just hope we can make it to that whatever commandery before nightfall.

"Excuse me..."

"Un?"

Just then, a man came riding over on a horse, and seemed in a rush.

I looked over and he looked exactly like the average old farmer, though he seemed very unused to riding a horse.

"Is there something you require our assistance for?" Yun Chang asked politely.

"Ah, you all must be a band of travelling merchants right. I want to ask..." He thought for a moment. "How do I get to Zhuo commandery?"

"If we're not wrong, it's this road."

I pointed in front of us.

"Is that so, thank you. To be perfectly honest," He laughed and whistled behind him, and there were the breaths and voices of many could be heard from the nearby forest. "We are actually the Yellow Turban Army."

"..."

"..."

"Hahaha, if you're going to make a joke like that at least prepare your props, you don't even have a yellow turban, how could you be the Yellow Turban army?"

I and Yun Chang were silenced at his words and only Yi De was still fully relaxed.

What Yi De said did make sense however, though not all that much.

"Eh, you're right little lady. But no matter how we try to raise an army, we

are but mere farmers. Yellow turbans are too expensive for us, even I, Cheng Yuan Zhi, who commands 50,000 strong cannot get one."

"..." Yi De also went silent.

We looked at each other, and I could tell that my expression was the least affected.

We really met with them!! And it was even the 50,000 strong contingent!!

"Un? What's wrong with you all?"

Shakes head.

Shakes head.

Shakes head.

"Haa... We'll be going ahead first then?"

Nods.

Nods.

Nods.

As I watched them leave, only when I saw the rearguard did I relax.

Looks like we avoided it...

I nodded with relief at Yun Chang and Yi De and the 2 also nodded back showing they understood–

“A good chance, kill!!” Yi De yelled out.

“Everyone charge forth with me!!” Yun Chang roared as well.

The yellow turban-less Yellow Turban army were completely take unawares by the several hundred men behind who charged into their midst all of a sudden and their formation soon descended into disarray.

“...” I was completely in a daze. “Oi! Yi De! Yun Chang! I didn’t... No, it’s too far, they won’t hear me.”

I pulled on the reins but couldn’t get the horse to move. And so I stood there dumbfounded as I saw the slaughter before me.

Shouts, violence and cries filled my ears. Blood and flesh were flowing and thrown about so much that I could not differentiate between pieces of meat and humans.

I wanted to get off the horse but I knew that, faced with such a bloody sight, my legs had long gone soft.

The ending went without saying, we won, because we killed the general first (the farmer on a horse) and our losses were few. The other side’s losses were few either as they had scattered and escaped, with some surrendering to us.

(TL: It might seem unrealistic but you must understand that this is an era

where losing a general is far more detrimental than in modern warfare as the general is oftentimes the sole decision maker. Moreover, these were farmers, not professional soldiers.)

(TL: In the original, Liu Bei did indeed face off against Cheng Yuan Zhi in a place near Zhuo commandery and used ambushing tactics as well to win. But there were other named participants, and of course, none of these comedic events took place.)

"Big brother, the 2 of us killed the enemy's grand marshal and field marshal, and the enemy descended into total chaos." Yi De said excitedly at the camp at night.

"Didn't you 2 say you don't know martial arts?" I said coldly.

"Yeah, but the other side doesn't know either right?" Yi De's excitement was not dampened in the least.

"So-called martial arts, doesn't necessarily need formalised training. In my opinion martial arts is the crystallisation of one's bravery and mine triumphed his, so I won, that's all." Yun Chang said as she read a string bound book. She stopped and looked at me, "What's wrong big brother, you look terrible."

(TL: This is actually not more far-fetched compared to the original fiction as it's actually quite weird how the original Zhang Fei and Guan Yu could fight so well. There is no documented history or even mention of their lives in the fiction version before they met Liu Bei. Given Liu Bei's status as a through and through peasant/villager, it is very likely that the 2 of them were unremarkable peasants/villagers as well.)

"Maa, it's the first time I met with that sort of situation." I laughed helplessly, "I didn't feel anything when I saw it on TV before but seeing it right in front of me has left me with nothing but feelings of disgust."

"It's my first time too." Yi De said nonchalantly.

"Eh?"

"By the way, it is my first time as well." Yun Chang looked at me, "... Do you think we are both mad?"

I only regained my senses when I heard her finish, and realised that I was looking at them like I saw some weirdoes and hurriedly turned away and denied what she said.

"Big brother, don't you know? Being able to survive in present times is a privilege." Yi De said in a serious tone, unlike her usual carefree one, "If we want to live on, then we have to act like madmen at the right times."

"... But!!" I slammed my fist down on the rocks. I really don't know how I should view the things that have happened and my emotions which had been swirling about had already broke the limits of what I could hold back. "They are living in poverty, and if they weren't, they wouldn't be rebelling no? And not only are we not saving them, we are destroying them, is that really the right thing to do? Aren't they just ordinary farmers who saw no other way out to live?"

"..." Yun Chang was silent for a while, "But they are no longer farmers. They are traitors now."

"They have killed, pillaged, and done many things which are not what farmers should be doing, and have forgotten who they are and what they fought for. They, are no longer farmers."

"But... But... A-re?"

My eyes were already wet, and I did not know if it was from the fear of

the battle before, sympathy for those people, my helplessness at meeting up with event after event, or my inability to do anything but watch as bodies pile up on the battlefield... Maybe a bit of everything.

"Big brother is really kind huh." A soft voice came from close to my ear.

"Yun, Yun Chang?"

Yun Chang hugged me from the front and had a faint smile on her face. Her long red hair seemed even more radiant than usual from the light of the fire.

"But it is because you are like that, that I feel you are fit to be our big brother."

"Yi De?"

Yi De was hugging me from behind and rested her head on my shoulders, smiling widely. That little face was somehow very reassuring.

I felt different kinds of warmth from my back and chest that slowly spread out through my body.

Deep down, I had always known, that I had no escape from this. I know too that I can only adapt to the things before me. As for whether I would lose my way, I cannot be sure.

But that is fine, at least I have these 2 girls beside me.

"... Thank you." I wrapped one arm about Yun Chang, and stroked Yi De's head with the other, as I smiled with tears in my eyes. "I'm happy to have the 2 of you beside me."

"Hu~~~~" In the morning the next day, I took a deep breath, "Speaking of which, where are we going today?"

"..."

"..."

"You haven't thought about it!?" Though I too had no right to berate them about it. "Hai~~~ Forget it, just don't let everyone know. After the previous battle, everyone's morale is high and quite a number of Yellow Turban troops have joined us. If they know we have no destination in mind, won't they commit mutiny?"

(TL: If you ever played a game like Sengoku Rance, you will know that a key game mechanic is having enemy troops join you after defeating them or winning the battle. This actually does happen, and goes all the way up to generals as well.)

"So... So shameful!"

"Yun Chang! Softer!"

"Excuse me, can I ask you," Just then, someone spoke from behind and I turned around to see 2 people. One was wearing a tunic and the other was wearing satin. "The 2 of us are lost, and after speaking with each other, we found that we are both coincidentally heading to Zhuo commandery. We saw your merchant troupe and came to ask for directions to Zhuo commandery."

Why do we look like a merchant troupe?

I pointed ahead silently... This scene felt exactly the same as the one

yesterday huh~~~

"Ah, thanks."

"Much appreciated."

"... Ah, may I ask who the 2 of you are..." Yun Chang added in, and then the 2 answered simultaneously–

"Ah I am Zou Jing and have brought my forces on orders from the administrator of You state Liu Yan to support Zhuo commandery. It's a little shameful to admit, but I have gotten separated from my troops."

(TL: Zou Jing is actually the guy who used 500 men to repel Cheng Zhi Yuan's 50,000 which was eventually defeated by Liu Bei.)

"I am Zhang Bao, the General of the Land, and I have come to serve as the warlord for the forces sent on orders from the General of Heaven to conquer Zhuo commandery. I managed to make it this far but I haven't met with them at all, and decided to go ahead to Zhuo commandery but then I got lost."

(TL: General of Land is a self-proclaimed title of Zhang Bao, who is one of the leaders of the Yellow Turbans. General of Heaven is a self-proclaimed title of Zhang Jue, the overall leader of the Yellow Turbans.)

(TL: In short, these 2 lost idiots are on opposing sides of the war.)

... Now then, am I supposed to smile and say 'Is that so?'

Chapter 4: Don't tell me this is the defeat of the Yellow Turban Army

"Big brother, shouldn't we go give that Zou Jing guy a hand?" Yi De said as she looked at Zhang Bao and Zou Jing, who were wrestling on the ground.

"It's their own personal feud, how can we step in?"

"But shouldn't we separate them? They've been at it for almost half an hour now." Yun Chang said with impatience in her voice.

"No need for that, they don't have weapons anyway. Just treat their scuffles as their training."

Those 2 had been travelling together for about a day and hadn't exposed their identities to each other until now. That was quite a remarkable feat. And now that they know who each other is, conflict is unavoidable.

I didn't bring my troops and leave but sat at the side and watch. My troops weren't doing nothing either, and had started taking bets on who would win, and it looks like the majority are betting on Zou Jing.

No matter what, he is an officer of the Imperial Court after all, and has the support of the people.

"Excuse me~~~ General Zou~~ Need some help?" I asked for courtesy's sake.

“Ah!” He got punched, “No, no need.”

Maa, no one would normally ask for help. Calling for helpers in a one on one fight, who would do that? This unspoken rule has always existed since ancient times after all.

While I couldn't claim the reward for capturing Zhang Bao, I can't exactly just leave like that either.

If Zou Jing won, then I would go with him to Zhuo commandery with Zhang Bao in tow, and I would probably receive some reward no matter what. If Zhang Bao won, then I would capture him and then Zou Jing would owe me a favour.

But just as I was thinking about this—

“You traitor, don't be so arrogant... Eat this punch...”

“Ke!” Zhang Bao fell onto the ground from a heavy fist... Looks like the match is settled, and I quickly ordered my troops to tie him up. As he was being tied up, Zhang Bao still hadn't given up, “... Haa... Haa... Let me tell you, my little brother's rearguard is on the way. When they come, you will get it.”

“What!?”

Zou Jing got a shock from Zhang Bao's words.

“Hehehe, even if I'm captured now, my little brother will definitely save me. Even if he can't, your troops and you all will be caught in a pincer attack since Cheng Yuan Zhi has conquered Zhuo commandery.”

The tied up Zhang Bao laughed as he looked at us.

Hai~~~ I didn't want to, but I had to tell him.

"Actually, the Cheng Zhi Yuan you mentioned—" I looked at Yun Chang.

"Un, we defeated him." Yun Chang said calmly.

"Ah? That can't be possible right?" Zhang Bao's expression froze, but he should understand that we are not the kind of people who will say things with no backing. "No... Impossible..."

"Why would we lie to you."

My mood sank the moment I thought about yesterday.

An epiphany hit me, and I walked towards Zhang Bao and spoke to him while I looked him in the eye.

"Zhang Bao, I think it's better if you obey the Imperial Court."

"Huh? Are you telling me to surrender?"

"Yes, I am telling you to surrender. Not only you, but I also hope you can persuade the rest of your forces to do so as well."

"What nonsense are you spouting? How can we possibly surrender?!"

"... Actually you all know it deep down don't you." The look in my eyes,

was probably pity now. "Though you may have the numbers, your army is weak, and with just a few hundred strong militia I have dispersed your main force that numbers tens of thousands. Though you call yourselves the Yellow Turban Army, you can't even afford yellow cloth. Moreover, it is no longer like before. From now on, there will be many generals and officials who will hunt you down for rewards and honour. I think it won't be long before you are all decimated."

"So turn back while you still can."

As I spoke, I couldn't help but to think of what happened yesterday, and my voice choked.

"... Hai~~ You are really different from those in the official army." Zhang Bao sighed as he made a face. "Those people have never been very willing to waste their breath on us."

"I am not in the official army, at least not now."

"Is that so, no wonder then." Zhang Bao looked up to the sky, and in his eyes I could not see a single shred of hope. "But we can no longer hold back the Yellow Turban Army. Apart from the forces that we command directly, the Yellow Turban Army is no longer the same as before, and are no better than bandits."

"Hmph, you were a traitor to begin with so what else is there to say." Zou Jing said.

"You idiot! Will you die if you don't speak!"

"No matter the case, they are all subjects of the Imperial Court, General Zou's words aren't too appropriate."

Yi De and Yun Chang couldn't stay silent at Zou Jing's words and retorted him.

"It's fine, he's right. Saying such things now is too late, and the moment we began our rebellion we had no way to turn back... Please don't look like that, even I am feeling sad."

"... Un." I stood up, "Then at the very least, can you speak with your brothers about this?"

"Stop it! I told you already, we will never surrender. Give up already."

"But..."

"It's best you all don't surrender, then I can get more honour and rewards. Move! To Zhuo commandery with me!" Zou Jing interrupted my words and forcefully hauled Zhang Bao up. "For sympathising with traitors, by the laws you all should be severely punished. But since you all did defeat Cheng Zhi Yuan, I won't pursue the matter further."

"You! How can you keep saying such..."

"Little sister, don't bother arguing further. Not everyone is like big brother."

"... Hmph, I'll take it I never heard those words, as I'm a big hearted person after all." He laughed disgustingly, "I see that you lot want to serve the Imperial Court so why not come along with me to Zhuo commandery. My troops should have reached by now. We'll head over, organise ourselves, and take a short rest. I hear Zhang Jue's main encampment is not far from Julu commandery so we'll head out in that direction tomorrow- Ke ah!"

(TL: Zhang Jue is the name of the leader of the Yellow Turban Army.)

Before he could finish, an arrow pierced through his head and Zou Jing collapsed after letting out a weird cry.

“!”

My face went pale when I saw this, and I stepped back.

What is this situation!? My reply of ‘no thanks’ was still hanging on my lips and I hadn’t said it, yet the one I wanted to say it to had collapsed to the ground!?

“Big brother, calm down.” Yun Chang hugged me, “All troops on full alert!”

“Someone has attacked, be careful big brother.” Yi De was serious as well, and was frantically looking around.

“Looks like my little brother has come.” Zhang Bao’s face cracked into a smile. “Come out little brother, don’t hurt these people, they are not in the official army.”

“Not the official army? It wasn’t the official army who killed brother Cheng?” Again coming from the forest, a man who looked like Zhang Bao walked out as he spoke with displeasure in his voice. He turned toward the forest and spoke again, “Everyone stay put and be prepared. When I order it, charge forth.”

Kuh, it’s us who are in a severe situation now.

Zhang Bao walked forward and the man, who was called Zhang Liang,

hurriedly came forward to untie him.

"Cheng Zhi Yuan wouldn't listen to my, his warlord, and hastily led his forces to Zhuo commandery without even finding out the route beforehand. Being defeated is well within expectations."

... As expected that Cheng Zhi Yuan is another absurd general like us.

"Hmph, to not listen at this stage. But big brother, why are you letting these people live? Are you planning to recruit them?"

"Why would I? I just thought he was interesting and wanted to bring him to see the General of Heaven."

(TL: Recall that the General of Heaven is Zhang Jue. Zhang Liang's title is the General of the People.)

What? Go to where Zhang Jue is?

Why would I go there? I have nothing, to, do, with, him.

Right!! <The Essential Art of Great Peace> that was in the feather fan is written by Zhang Jue right? If I can meet him... Maybe I can find something out?

"Please do let us go with you." I went up and asked enthusiastically.

"This isn't up to you!" Zhang Liang reacted to my attitude, "Big brother, have you gone mad? If we bring them there, there are many ways this could go wrong... Un?"

A pigeon flew by and landed on Zhang Liang's shoulder.

Should be a messenger pigeon.

Zhang Liang took out a piece of paper from the pigeon's leg and looked at it—

"Damn it! This is bad!" Zhang Liang's expression instantly became one of anxiety and panic. "Julu commandery has fallen, and the General of Heaven is running this way with the survivors while being chased by enemy forces."

"What, that's way too fast..." Zhang Bao frowned, "Don't go to Zhuo commandery anymore with your forces and make preparations to receive the General of Heaven."

"Un. Oi, get a horse out for the General of the Land." Zhang Liang yelled toward the forest. As soon as he finished saying that, he ran to the forest and thundering of footsteps, twice as loud as Cheng Zhi Yuan's contingent, could be heard.

"What are you all going to do? From what you said, you seem like you want to meet the General of Heaven." Zhang Bao said as he got up on a horse.

I turned around and looked Yun Chang and Yi De in the eye, and they nodded.

"Un, we're going... But we cannot help you."

"We don't need help from such a small number of people anyway... Follow us."

Zhang Bao galloped to the front of the contingent.

"Big brother you should ride with me since you still aren't used to riding."

"Oh, thanks Yi De."

That's a great help. Riding alone was still very difficult for me and my buttocks hurt quite a bit just from riding for a while.

"That, actually you can ride with me as well..." Yun Chang said in a low voice and tone quite unlike her usually.

"... Nothing, big brother should just ride with Yi De."

As she said so, Yun Chang swiftly got up onto her horse with a red face and rode off with her hair floating behind her. I rode with Yi De at the head of our contingent.

I took out the feather fan which was at my waist and looked at it. It looked dignified as ever.

After rushing for almost 2 hours, we could hear shouting ahead of us.

This time, several dozen people came running towards us.

"Little brother? Didn't you go on ahead?"

"We're late, too late!!" Zhang Liang cried, as he rode in front of us, "We rushed ahead as fast as we could and when we finally met up with the General of Heaven, continuous cannon fire sounded from 2 neighbouring

mountains and that was when we knew we got trapped. I only escaped with the General of Heaven thanks to Pei Yuan Shao bringing the main body to stop the enemy forces.”

(TL: Pei Yuan Shao is another general of the Yellow Turbans. Not very important.)

As he said so, he looked back to a person wearing a cloak.

“Is that so... As long as the General of Heaven is alright, then it’s all good.” Zhang Bao said dreadily.

“What’s our next step?”

“We can only go to the south, but I don’t know if Bo Cai will be willing to take us in...”

(TL: Bo Cai is another Yellow Turban general. Not important.)

Before he could finish, more cries came from in front.

“... Looks like we can’t even run to the south haa~~~~” Zhang Bao gave a long sigh, “Zhang Liang, we’ll distract the enemy forces.”

“I can do that with you, but big brother, we can’t let the General of Heaven run away alone.”

“Relax,” Zhang Bao laughed and then turned to face me. “About this, you won’t refuse right.”

Zhang Liang seemed to want to protest this and Zhang Jue seemed to

want to say something as well but Zhang Bao stopped both of them and they waited for my answer.

He means for us to escape with Zhang Jue huh.

... But why are you trusting me so much?

"To be honest, I cannot make this decision." Though I was fine with it, bringing Zhang Jue along was dangerous and I had to be responsible for my troops. "Do you 2 agree to it?"

Yi De and Yun Chang laughed and said.

"Does it need to be said? Of course we're helping."

"No matter what, they've pleaded sincerely for help. In that case, doing our utmost best to help is the right thing to do."

"No matter who they are." They finished together in one voice.

"Un... Zhang Bao, we will help you." I said to Zhang Bao.

Zhang Bao was silent for a while, before he lowered his head, shook it, then looked to the sky and breathed in deeply, only then was he able to hold back the overflowing tears.

"Our General of Heaven... Our big sister, please."

"Please."

As they said so, they brought the cloaked Zhang Jue off the horse and then with the remaining men left, they began riding off in the opposite direction of the battlefield. At this time, I finally saw the, wearing the symbol of the Yellow Turban Army, the yellow cloth.

Yun Chang forcefully pulled Zhang Jue up onto her horse and we hurriedly hid in the forest for fear of being found by the official army while we watched the official army chase the Yellow Turban Army.

The Yellow Turban Army's end is near huh, I thought.

I have seen, learnt and felt many things about in this one day which has brought much conflict in me when I try to piece them together. At the very least, I cannot conclude whether the Yellow Turban Army is good or evil. In terms of the Three Kingdoms, they are unimportant and are only part of the opening act. But to me, life is never unimportant, and the name of 'Yellow Turban Army' demonstrates their value.

We were all quiet inside the forests, albeit a single weeping person beside me. If I wasn't wrong, this must be the General of Heaven- Zhang Jue who is crying.

"It's me, it's all my fault that you all are going to die." Zhang Jue said, in a soft and unclear voice.

To have your brothers die for the sake of saving you, if it were me I would be suffering as well.

Speaking of which, that voice is really light, makes me think that he is...

Un?

Just now...

— Our big sister, please.

... Big sister?

I slowly raised Zhang Jue's hood with stiff hands—

A girl who had cried her eyes red with wavy hair appeared before me.

... Oh, my god.

I slapped my forehead.

Aiya, why are you a girl too~~~~

Chapter 5: Don't tell me this is actually Zhang Jue

"Here should be good enough... Set up camp! Light the fires!"

We had been travelling off the road to Zhuo commandery for some time and it was now nightfall. Everywhere around us was utterly unfamiliar wilderness, but this was actually reassuring.

During this time, my troops had made me feel a lot of pressure. This was because they did not know where I was taking them and I did not inform them of a concrete destination either all this while. Thus, they began to suspect that I did not have a destination in mind along the way.

Though they may be soldiers now, they are normal civilians at heart, and will not believe me without basis forever.

"Hai~~~ I'm so exhausted." Yi De set down her weapon and sank to the ground.

"It's no wonder you're tired. Though we rode on the way here, we've been at it non-stop for half a day already." Yun Chang said as she tidied her messy hair. "You should come down too."

"... Oh."

Zhang Jue who had been sitting behind jumped down timidly and planted her wooden stave on the ground.

"Um, umm..." Zhang Jue raised her head after jumping down the horse

with difficulty only to lower her head again when she saw us and spoke with clear nervousness, "I am but a stranger with all of you, yet you have willingly helped a traitor like me. Thank you everyone, truly."

As she said so she took off her hood and bowed.

"... Umm, Zhang Jue."

"Yes, please go on."

"There is only a horse in that direction, we are here."



"Ah, ah! So, so-so-sorry... My eyes aren't too good, and I can't see things clearly."

She frantically turned around, in a direction more or less facing us and kept bowing profusely.

Is it near-sightedness?... Then is she holding a wooden stick because of

that?

I kept thinking it was some sort of wand, but it's actually a white stick
huh~~~

(TL: White stick is the name of the stick blind / hard-at-seeing people use. I never knew. And Zhang Jue in the original was supposedly a Taoist sorcerer.)

I looked at the girl called Zhang Jue. She should be older than me but if I were to go by her looks, she seems my age. Her black wavy hair extended to her breasts, and her brown eyes seemed to be big but appeared small due to her frequent squinting.

(TL: No, Chinese people do not have brown eyes. Source: Me.)

"Maa, don't need to be so stiff about it. Your little brother left you to us, and naturally we must fulfill our responsibility." Yun Chang smiled as she said so, "If you don't mind, could you tell us who defeated you? Though your troops may be untrained, you should not be easily reduced to such a state based on your superior numbers."

As Yun Chang said so, sadness once again appeared on Zhang Jue's face but she nodded.

"Our encampment was at Julu commandery, which is more or less the last city we could control. Huang Fu Song and Lu Zhi suddenly attacked Julu earlier and we were caught off guard and had no choice but to abandon the city and escape. My brigadier-general said wait for nightfall when they let their guard down and then retake Julu."

(TL: Huang Fu Song and Lu Zhi are very unimportant generals.)

"Everything was still alright until here. But when night came, we were ambushed before we could initiate ours. As the night was exceptionally dark then, we didn't know their numbers and could only gather our survivors and run as we suffered attacks at our rear. We continued to run all night, and when dawn came, we found that we had run in the wrong direction and we were right before Julu city."

"And so, we were attacked on both sides and it took a fair bit of fierce fighting before we somehow broke through. By then I had no choice and wrote to ask my little brother for help but we walked into a trap by those people the moment we met. And so my troops and those of my little brother became the rear guard and we escaped somehow."

"..." I thought in silence for a bit, "Those people at the start, whose flags were they waving?"

"Un... Umm, I didn't see..." She pointed at her staff.

"Ah, sorry."

How could I have forgotten this, she clearly said it just now.

"Big brother, did you think of something?"

"No, it's nothing much..."

Though I don't know those troops belong to whom, when I think about the depth of tactics used, that definitely means that it isn't some small fry.

"Ah, right, Zhang Jue." I took out the fan. "Take a look at this."

"Un? This is?" She took the fan, and squinted at it, "What about this fan?"

Looks like the fan isn't hers...

"Umm, it's like this."

I summarised the story of my transfer to Zhang Jue, though I said I got into big trouble instead of saying that I travelled through space-time.

"Un..." She ruffles her hair as she thought. "That book <The Essential Art of Great Peace> is indeed mine, but I didn't write it, an immortal gave it to me. However, I have never read it as I can't see the words clearly."

(TL: No, this is not going to be Xianxia. But yes, in the original, Zhang Jue was supposedly taught and trained by an immortal.)

"Is that so..." So it's not her who wrote it, "Then where is that book now?"

"Ah, I gave it to Bo Cai when I passed through Qing state."

(TL: Bo Cai is yet another unimportant Yellow Turban general.)

"..." I gave up and sat back down as I put the fan away.

How could you just give away something you received from an immortal?! It's not like it takes up a lot of space, you could have just left it at home.

"Big brother don't give up, if that book is very important then all we have to do is go to Qing state- Though I don't know where Qing state is." That would have been very reassuring and comforting if it weren't for Yi De's last bit.

"Maa, no need for that. Some things become more elusive the more you chase it."

How do I say it, actually I'm just tired of travelling. What I want most now is to get to a small fry administrator's city and take a good rest.

"So what are you going to do now? Run to the south like your little brother said?" Though it was none of my business, I asked anyway.

"Un... But even I go there, they may not be willing to take me. Moreover, the situation of Yellow Turbans nationwide is very poor, and they won't be happy to feed another mouth." Zhang Jue said as she smiled helplessly.

"Then why don't you change your name and start afresh as a farmer again? Few people know about your looks after all."

"If I could do that, that would be the best. But I can't! I am responsible for the things the Yellow Turban Army did and there is no way I can selfishly live in peace." Zhang Jue said emotionally with her eyes wide open. "And I promised my little brothers from the start, that we will never return to farming until the day the world is at peace."

"Un~~ But you can't be a small fry in our army right." I thought for a bit, "Well what can you do? Can you command the weather or summon some magic beasts?"

"That... Actually I can't do any of those. My little brothers spread many lies about me." Zhang Jue rubbed her head with a helpless smile, and said abashedly, "If I really have to say it, apart from being able to read, I know a little bit about medicine."

"Medicine?"

"Un, don't look at me like that, I'm not bragging but my medical techniques are fairly sophisticated." She said with a somewhat proud look.

"Hou~~~"

"Big sister, she says she knows medical techniques."

"Un, I too know how to bandage wounds, albeit a bit roughly. Nothing strange."

"What? You all don't believe me!" She angrily took a small bag out of her cloak. "Look at this, this is powder I manufactured on my own. When you spread some of it on places that hurt, it stops hurting immediately. You can try it out."

"... Is this thing called 'mafeisan'?"

(TL: The first Chinese anesthesia.)

"!" She took a step back in shock, "That's amazing! How did you know? I only gave it a name yesterday! And I thought so long too!"

Hai...

I felt like I had no choice and stood up and grabbed Zhang Jue's shoulders as I looked at her with kind eyes.

"Eh?!!! U, umm, what... What..." Zhang Jue's shoulders trembled, her face turned red immediately and her mouth moved up and down but words

came out.

"Big brother? You, you want to..."

"I, if big brother wants, wants that then... I, I too... The sky is dark a, anyway... We can... Together..."

"I say," I ignored my sisters' inexplicable words and snatched the little bag away from her and began my bold— Tsukkomi, "This thing shouldn't be yours, but you probably don't know what a patent is. But what I want to say is, this isn't invented by you, it's invented a very impressive person called Hua Tuo."

(TL: Hua Tuo is a medical genius who existed in reality as well as in the original. He pioneered the use of surgical techniques and anesthesia at a time when the whole of China munched roots and herbs for everything from colds to cancer. You can think of him as an Asian Hippocrates. However, when he died, he destroyed his manuals and since he had no disciples, his techniques and formulas were lost. And so doomed the progress of Chinese medical surgery.)

Though I don't know how this thing winded up in your hands, it isn't to strange, after everything I've been through, for Hua Tuo and Zhang Jue to know each other somehow.

But what is with my little sisters? Why did you all loosen your belts? Are you all going to bed? Speaking of which, they seemed to have frozen after I finished speaking, and their faces turned red immediately.

"..." She was struck dumb for a mement. "If you're talking about Hua Tuo—"

She pointed at herself.

"Don't be silly, your family name is Zhang and your given name is Jue okay?"

"Right, and my courtesy name is Hua Tuo."

"Haha, you are such a..."

What did she just say?

"Your family name is Zhang and your given name is Jue."

"And my courtesy name is Hua Tuo."

... Eh?

"Really!?"

The me now was beginning to be very afraid and I seriously doubted the veracity of using the things I know to make sense of this world.

(TL: Note that Hua Tuo and Zhang Jue are NOT the same people in history and the originals.)

"A, and so that is to say that your family name is Zhang, your given name is Jue and your courtesy name is Hua Tuo. Zhang Jue, Zhang Hua Tuo?"

Nods.

"A, and that is to say that when the neighbouring auntie hollers for you,

she can call you Zhang Jue or Hua Tuo?"

"Though I don't quite get what you mean, but basically that is what it is."

This sort of thing, how can it be...

... Alright fine, I'll trust you.

"Yun Chang Yi De, I've decided that we shall keep her." I said to the 2 who were fixing their clothing with red faces.

"Ah, ah, that is good."

"Ah, I have nothing against that."

What's wrong? From the moment I finished, you 2 have had weird expressions.

"And so that's how it is." I turned to look at Zhang Jue, "If you don't mind, then stay with us. As for your position... We'll take it that you are my personal adviser."

"Un, I don't have anywhere else to go anyway. And my little brother left me with you despite having exchanged no more than a few sentences with you, which means that he felt following you would not be the wrong choice."

"Ha, it's not something so impressive." I replied, "Alright, from now on, we won't call you Zhang Jue, we'll call you Hua Tuo."

"Un, being a little intimate is good too."

(TL: Calling one by their courtesy name is something like calling people by their first names in Western tradition, or by calling Japanese by their given names. Nowadays, there is no such thing as a courtesy name, so it's just first name last name.)

"Un, alright."

I couldn't say it, that it wasn't because of intimacy, but because of safety that I want to call you Hua Tuo. If we kept at it with using Zhang Jue, then we would definitely be mistaken for Yellow Turbans.

"Can I ask for everyone's names..."

"Ah, we haven't introduced ourselves. I am Liu Bei, Liu Xuan De... Though I don't think I am."

"I am Xuan De's little sister, Guan Yu, Guan Yun Chang. I look forward to working with you." Yun Chang said as she flicked her hair and cupped one fist in the other hand in a gesture of respect.

(TL: It's that gesture that you always see in Wushu shows / competitions when they greet one another.)

"I am Zhang Fei, Zhang Yi De, the smallest little sister. I look forward to getting along with you." Yi De said, as she held her hip.

"Please do get along with me generals."

"Aiyaya, don't need to bother with the formalities and just call us by name."

“Un, thought I can’t quite see who is who, I have at least remembered your names. If you should get injured, come to me and I will apply medicine for you.”

She bowed again as she said so.

“Hmph, we won’t get injured easily yo~~~”

“Un, we’ll trouble you when the time comes.

Yun Chang and Yi De replied.

“Now then, introductions are all done, and the sky is dark. Let’s go to sleep.”

I clapped twice and then let out a yawn.

Though we still don’t know where to go tomorrow, that sort of thing isn’t so urgent that it can’t be settled tomorrow anyway.

... Un?

Just then, the sound of hooves could be heard from a certain direction. Not many, but they were powerful, and one could tell those were good horses just from hearing their gallop.

“What is it?” Zhang Jue, no... Huo Tuo was squinting into the distance. If you can’t see, don’t need to force yourself you know.

“Looks like we have guests.”

"Un, but don't awaken our troops yet. From the sound of the hooves, there shouldn't be too many people."

As they finished speaking, Yun Chang and Yi De had their weapons in hand already.

Just as I was wondering if I should pull out my twin swords as well, the torch fire from the band of horse riders had already revealed their figure clearly before our eyes.

"Who goes there?!"

Yun Chang yelled with apprehension in her voice.

"Please do not be alarmed everyone. We are just a squad that has escaped from Du city." The leading rider quickly said. "We saw light here, and thought it was an encampment of the Imperial Court army, and wished to seek shelter for a night."

From that voice, the general must be a woman. Just being a female general though, was no longer a surprise to me.

Under the light of the flame torches, I saw her wearing a glorious coat armour, with a stern, serious look and razor-sharp gaze that would have trumped any male bravado. Even with such an unyielding countenance, her graceful beauty shone through.



"We're not a battalion of the Imperial Court. Ah, we are also not any merchant troupe."

I quickly denied it, and turned back to signal Yun Chang and Yi De to put down their weapons. Yi De remained on guard at first, but I looked at her a few times and she finally relented.

"But at the same time, you aren't traitors right?" She said as she looked at us, and got off her horse without waiting for a reply. "Now then, will you mind us camping beside you?"

"Ah, this is not a problem. But may I first know who--"

And just as I said that, my words stopped at my throat, and I sighed helplessly from the bottom of my heart. Truly, this time was worse than before.

Because, she wielded a halberd.

(TL: A Chinese style halberd, which is a signature weapon for...)

"Ah, I haven't introduced myself." She swung the halberd around and stuck the blade portion deeply into the ground, before reaching out. "I am the foster daughter of Ding Yuan, the Inspector of Bing state, Lu Bu Lu Feng Xian."

... I never expected that even 'he' was a beautiful girl?!

And I'm not Dong Zhuo, why are you meeting with me?!

(TL: For those who don't know, Lu Bu is widely regarded to be the strongest warrior in the Three Kingdoms, above even Guan Yu. And Lu Bu is not supposed to meet Liu Bei until an event that happens later in Volume 1.)

Chapter 6: Don't tell me this is a short meeting with Lu Bu

... Can't sleep.

I tossed and turned in my tent for a long while before I gave up and carefully got up so as not to awaken my little sisters and Hua Tuo and made my way out and sat on a rock.

(TL: I know what you're thinking. Sadly, no.)

The wilderness was cold at night with cold winds that chilled to the bone but this sort of chill was perfect for cooling my frustrated self.

The source of my frustration, apart from uncertainties about the future, was largely because I had met with the number 1 warrior in the Three Kingdoms – Lu Bu.

By right she should not meet me here, and if I'm not mistaken our first meeting (fight) should be at Hulao Pass... Could it be that we are going to start fighting now? Or am I supposed to take the responsibility to send her to Dong Zhuo? No no no, that would probably be worse.

(TL: Just to get a sense of how OP Lu Bu is, even all 3 brothers fighting together could not defeat him.)

After our brief introductions just now, she went back to her camp. It was now the middle of the night but looking at the bonfires, they are probably night owls.

Since we will most likely part ways with Lu Bu tomorrow, it would be better to do so naturally and without comfortably.

"But really, I didn't think Lu Bu would be a woman too~~~~"

Could it be that all non-small fry generals are women... Can't be right.

"Is there a problem with me being a woman?"

"Waaah!!" I screamed, and nearly fell to the ground at the sudden voice.

"Apologies, did I scare you?" She stared at me coldly. "But talking behind my back is not right."

"Ah, so, sorry."

What a bad move, to have let her hear me say such things.

"Really, what era is it already. To think that there are still people like you who discriminate against women." She sighed as she sat beside me.

"It isn't discrimination," I'm just surprised really. "Speaking of which, why aren't you all asleep yet?"

I can't believe it. To think that a young female general more than 1,000 years in the past is saying something that even someone from my time can't say.

"Did I awake you?"

"No, I came out because I couldn't sleep."

"Is that so," She leaned back and lay down. "Actually, I was with my foster father to Du city today."

Is it Ding Yuan? Then that means that the Lu Bu now was not yet famous.

"Where is he?"

"Dead, I don't know who assassinated him." Her head bent down low as she said this. "I judged the situation then as dangerous and quickly brought my subordinates out of the city to escape the danger."

(TL: In the original, Dong Zhuo becomes Lu Bu's foster father. But Lu Bu serves under Ding Yuan first, and it is Lu Bu who betrays and kills him under inducement from Dong Zhuo, who was eventually betrayed by Lu Bu.)

"Are you sad?"

"I'm alright. To him, I was just a useful tool. So my feelings for him aren't particularly deep." On saying so, she gestured toward her camp with her mouth. "Though I may say so, appearances have to be kept up and so I let them carry out a funeral but I couldn't stand the atmosphere inside so I came out."

She gave a dry laugh on saying so.

"Then what are your plans? Go serve Dong Zhuo?"

"Un? How did you know?" She sat up with a surprised look.

"Maa, I just guessed at random."

"Is that so. You can go be a fortune teller next time huh~~~" She said with some suspicion but lay back down. "Honestly, yesterday my old acquaintance Li Su came to look for me to recruit me to join Dong Zhuo. Since I now have nowhere to go, I'm thinking of going there."

(TL: Li Su is another minor general, served Dong Zhuo.)

"I see... Going there isn't anything bad anyway."

I gave her a seemingly nonchalant but deeply meaningful reply as I knew what would happen after she went. Though I wanted to offer my advice, as someone who is unrelated, I felt I shouldn't run my mouth. Moreover, even if I did say something, she may not listen.

"I don't know that person so who knows... But my brigadier general Zhang Liao seems to know something and keeps telling me not to serve him."

(TL: In the original, Zhang Liao was originally Dong Zhuo's general and only served Lu Bu after Dong Zhuo's death.)

Zhang Liao?

"... The one called Zhang Liao... Is a girl as well?"

"That's right, didn't you see her? She was behind me when we came."

"I really didn't notice her..." Why would I even know what Zhang Liao

looks like?

Never mind, so be it if they are women. I won't be surprised anymore even if the Emperor Xian of Han is a woman.

(TL: Emperor Xian of Han is the last emperor of the Han Dynasty.)

"She's very old fashioned in her thinking and is probably wholeheartedly mourning my foster father. Even though he never favoured her in the least."

"But since she said that much, I feel that General Lu Bu should think about it carefully."

"Un, I will I will. But call me Feng Xian, I don't like that sort of rigid politeness."

I had planned on not saying anything, but in the end decided to offer some words.

"Ah... Feng Xian, the world is very large, and a dragon such as yourself does not need to be stuck to the idea of serving a lord. You should have your own thinking and things you want to fight for. I feel that if it's you, you can do it on your own and need not serve someone else."

"Not that I'm bragging, but though I do have skill with martial arts... I, I, I'm actually very stupid, and I don't have much of a reputation either." She said, stammering at the second half.

(TL: This is historically accurate.)

"Maa, you can read some books to gain more knowledge." I offered

advice that I myself had not followed. "Or depend on the right people for help. I feel that the Zhang Liao you mentioned before is quite the person to depend on."

"Un~~~ She is a very upright person, and often solves the problems I face, and we even spar when we are bored."

"Yeah, since she is willing to follow you, it's naturally because she sees in you something that she wants to fight for. So, you should find what it is you want to fight for as well.

"Haha, I don't really get that." She laughed dryly. "... Maa, that's how it is. Those people inside should be done by now." She got up and her relaxed expression became her stern one again, "I'll be going back."

She turned and left, and from her back, I could sense loneliness, but of a kind that was difficult to describe.

"Oh, have a good night."

She waved and entered the tent.

Later on I got sleepy from the cold as well, and fell asleep shortly after I returned to the tent.

The next day, all of us got up early and left the tent. Though it was early for us, Feng Xian and her troops had already been up for a while.

Seeing as they were leaving, I decided to go over and say good-bye. Feng Xian saw us coming and walked over as well.

"Leaving already?"

"Un, leaving soon. In the end, I still feel I should head to Dong Zhuo's place and take a look, and if that doesn't work then I'll just have to find another way."

"I really don't know what my lord is thinking, to go ahead even after all my protests." Just then a girl with a stern look and frowned eyebrows came over from the side. From her looks, she should be younger than Feng Xian by a bit.

Though her hair was not very long, it was combed neatly and her eyebrows were always upturned. From her green eyes, I could sense a sternness that was different from Feng Xian's, and at the same time seemed clear and transparent. How should I put it, just based on temperament... She feels a lot like Yun Chang.

Is she Zhang Liao?

"Maa, but Wen Yuan, we need a place to go to no matter what, so think of this as a temporary solution for now." Feng Xian laughed, and then got on her horse... Speaking of which, this horse isn't red huh. "Now then, we'll be leaving."

(TL: Wen Yuan is Zhang Liao's courtesy name. Also, Lu Bu supposedly has a legendary steed that is red in colour. There are more later events about this horse so I'll refrain from giving more explanations about it here.)

"Ah, have a safe trip."

I waved and watched as Feng Xian slowly rode into the distance.

"Big brother, yesterday night when I came out for a breather, I got along really well with the officer beside General Lu Bu." Yun Chang said

excitedly. "As expected, there are still great people out there who believe in righteousness."

"Is that officer called Zhang Liao Zhang Wen Yuan?"

"Eh?! How did big brother know? Did big brother speak with her?"

"No, but I know from just one look that you are the same kind of people." I said.

"Alright, we're all packed. Let's..."

Though we haven't decided where to go, but we'll do that after we started moving.

"Oj~~~"

I turned and saw someone familiar.

"Un? Feng Xian? Why did you all come back?"

"Ah, we ran into a courier from the Imperial Court not long after we set off and he asked about your whereabouts. And so we hurriedly brought him here." Feng Xian jumped off the horse and a neatly dressed soldier got off his horse as well. "This man is Liu Bei, it's a good thing we got in time before they left."

The soldier ran over as he waved his hand.

"At last I've found you. I've been looking for you since yesterday but I could never find you in Zhuo commandery."

"Ah... We, umm, made a last-minute change in direction."

We couldn't possibly say we escaped with Zhang Jue right?

"May I ask what is the matter?"

"Ah, there's a letter here for you. The Imperial Court recognises your efforts in defeating the Yellow Turban Army, and you are henceforth appointed the Prefect of Anxi county."

"Ah?" I received the letter with suspicion. "How did you all find out that I defeated the Yellow Turban Army?"

Those who know should only be that small fry who died to an arrow and Zhang Bao and Zhang Liang...

"Indeed no one knew, but Captain Cao specially mentioned you. And so you were given the reward of Prefect."

"Cao!!" I was shocked on hearing the name.

"Is it Cao Cao!? But... How did he know!?"

I hastily opened the letter, and it was a personal letter from Cao Cao as expected.

There were only 13 words written in large font on the paper- Because Zhuo was not lost, I could attack Jue, I offer my thanks.

(TL: Cao Cao, in original and here, likes to write poems and sayings. And in his writing, he always writes in a manner that is brief yet formal and eloquent, pretty much impossible to translate as an English equivalent would just sound like broken English.)

“...”

So the one who attacked Zhang Jue, was actually Cao Cao huh... I wordlessly folded the letter and sank into thought as I stared at the envelope.

“... Alright, I got it.” Though Cao Cao caught my attention, it’s not like I know where to go to find him. “Then do I have to report to Du city?”

“Ah, no need for thT. You can just assume the role directly.” The courier gave a face that looked like I was trouble. “General Ding Yuan was assassinated in Du city yesterday. Even now the city is in chaos. No one will be bothered with the reporting of a little Prefect like you~~~”

Even a courier knows about this?

“Do they know who killed General Ding Yuan?” Zhang Liao cut in and asked as she stepped forward from behind Feng Xian.

“Though it can’t be concluded yet, some in the Imperial Court has identified one of General Ding Yuan’s subordinates, Lu Bu, as the prime suspect.”

“What!!” Feng Xian angrily yelled on hearing her name, “On what grounds!”

“I heard that at the moment when General Ding Yuan was assassinated, the one to escape first was that person called Lu Bu which is why

everyone suspects her.”

“But that is!”

“Feng Xian, I understand how you feel but stay calm first!” I stopped Feng Xian’s words, and she understood despite being very dissatisfied and did not speak further.

According to what the courier said, there were probably wanted notices nationwide now so the most important thing is not to reveal her identity.

“You said some suspected Lu Bu did it, know who that is?”

“Yes, say it!” Feng Xian’s expression now was very terrifying and he would probably have killed the courier if I hadn’t stopped her.

“I, I’m just a courier, how could I know so much... But I have heard that the first to accuse her is Inspector Yuan Shao And Dong Zhuo, Administrator of Liang state.”

“What!? Dong Zhuo!”

“Feng Xian!”

I motioned to Feng Xian with my eyes to keep quiet and thanked and gave the courier some money to make his way back.

“Damn it!!!~~~~” Feng Xian roared and smashed her halberd on a rock after the courier had left, smashing it to sand. “That Dong Zhuo, to be recruiting me and framing me at the same time, what is he plotting?!”

"Don't you see now master? This is exactly as I said, that Dong Zhuo is not the sort of person you want to serve." Zhang Liao said indignantly as she walked over. "This time, he is framing my lord, and is acting as if he is just finding a scapegoat but he is actually leaving you with no route to go but to serve him~~~"

"..." Feng Xian closed her eyes and thought, before opening them wide,. "That old man! I'm going to find him!"

"Feng Xian, wait." I stopped her when because I got worried when I saw her vicious face.

"Ah, I must thank you for this matter." She was about to flip onto her horse but she paused on seeing me run over. "If it weren't for the courier, zi would not have known about this."

Before you leave, I feel like I mjest say this to you." I thought about it and some things must be said. "Feng Xian, you said yesterday that you are stupid but this is untrue. Feng Xian just doesn't know how to express herself. On this matter, you still have quite a ways to go."

"Expressing myself... Huh? Un, I will remember this along with the things from last night. Thank you for your kind guidance." Feng Xian smiled for the first time to me, and then got on her horse. "If fate allows it, I will find you when I'm done."

"Un, if you want to find me, head to Anxi country, we 'll be there."

Or maybe the next time we meet will be in Xu state.

"I hope to see you again!"

As Feng Xian finished, she pulled her horse's reins and brought her troops

far away in no time.

Looking at the horses riding into the distance, if I really had something I wanted to say then it would be– Rest in peace, Dong Zhuo.

“I wonder if we can meet again?” Yi De said with both hands behind her back.

“If I could, I would like to speak with Wen Yuan again.” Yun Chang smiled as she looked at the horses leaving.

“About that, who knows.” This history is way too chaotic. “Anyway let’s go. To Anxi county.”

No matter if it’s Cao Cao, or Lu Bu, or my feather fan.

The future, shall be left to the future.

Chapter 7: Don't tell me this is the thrashing of the Imperial Inspector

"So boreddd~::~" Zhang Fei rolled across the table in the hall like naughty little kid.

(TL: Don't know what's wrong with the author, sometimes he uses the courtesy name, sometimes not.)

Though she isn't very big to begin with.

"Don't be like that, it will be disrespectful to those people who come to seek redress." Yun Chang said, looking more like Yi De's mother than her older sister as she carried Yi De off the table with a troubled look.

"But this week has been so boring. No battles to fight, no armies to march. We just sit here all day and night, when are we going to do great things?"

"As for me, I actually think this isn't too bad. The commoners here are friendly, the original officials are capable and don't need our interference." I said as I sat on the side and leisurely drank tea.

As expected, peace is the best.

"And besides, didn't you complain about how tiring it was when we were marching about? Why do you want to do it now?"

"Big brother, everything has to be in moderation. To have me be totally free all of sudden, what am I to do? Slaughter pigs?"

Why not? Isn't that a good idea? That's your original occupation.

(TL: Unable to confirm.)

"Big brother, actually I have something to say about this as well." Yun Chang walked up to me, "Though what Yi De said was a little frivolous, she has a point. We raised an army for the purpose of bringing peace to the world and restore the Han rule. The world is still chaotic and many officials such as Dong Zhuo and Yuan Shu have designs on the throne. The Han royal family is in danger and is in need of help. How can we hide here and pass out time leisurely?"

Yun Chang frowned, looking unsatisfied with the present situation.

"Though I don't quite understand what Yun Chang said, I think being vigilant and not being too relaxed is better." Hua Tuo said with a similarly troubled look as she kept brisk walking in circles about the hall, stopping to use her white stick to regain balance from time to time but never sitting down. "Based on my recent body check ups, we have all gotten a little fatter after these past few days."

"Wu..." Yi De pinched her tummy with a face that looked like she was about to cry.

"That, that is... Big brother, let me say this first. It's not because of weight gain that I'm thinking of going into battle to lose weight."

"Ah... I understand what you mean." Well I shouldn't say too much about things like weight since they are girls after all, "No need to be so hasty, soon we will return to our days of living from hand to mouth. Look, I've already prepared the thing that is needed."

Did you really think I was just passing my days leisurely? Well, a little, but I was actually waiting for an event.

“What thing?”

I pulled out something from my waist and the 3 came up close to see it.

“This is it.”

“A whip? What are you going to do with a whip?”

“This, will of course be used to—”

“Lord Liu Bei!! Lord Liu Bei!!” A small official came rushing in, “The Imperial Inspector is here!!”

Un, just as I had predicted, the inspector has arrived.

“I got it, go and receive the inspector first. We will be there shortly.” I got up and looked at each of them, “This whip, is for hitting the Imperial Inspector.”

The 3 of them frowned on hearing what I said.

“Big brother, they are an even higher official than us. Us hitting them? Are you mad? There’s also no reason to do so right?” The one to first say such things was unexpectedly the one most likely to be the attacked, Yi De.

"I didn't say we had to hit him, we just need to do so after he performs wrongdoings on civilians."

"Huh?"

They don't seem to understand.

Never mind, when the time comes, I'll do it when I feel like it.

"Let's go and receive him."

"The Imperial Inspector has arrived!"

"... Gr, greetings Mi, miss Inspector."

As I finished stammering my greetings, everyone bowed.

"Ah~~~ I'm so happy~~~ Prefect Liu." She said as she threw a seductive wink at me.

Oh, my god.

... Why is it like this.

This Inspector... Looks to be nearing 30 years of age. The clothes she was wearing was covering even less than her hair. And she had a smoking hot body with huge breasts. Just one wink could make all the men here fall to her charms.

In short she was very... Morally unrestrained.

Un, I must not be antagonistic.

"U, umm... Please come in."

She came off her horse but she did not walk straight in. Instead she went out of the way to my side and--

"I love young meat the most." She blew softly into my ear after whispering to me.

"Haa!?"

I backed up instinctively with my face and ears dyed red, and Yun Chang and Yi De who was behind me hurriedly supported me. On seeing this, she merely laughed.

"Kekeke, such a cute boy."

After saying that, she went on ahead through the doors. I stayed in that exact pose, with my hair standing on end, and took a long while to recover.

The, the Inspector is her? Even if we leave aside the change in sex, this is way too different from what I know.

"That woman... How dare she toy with big brother!"

"Don't need to be angry little sister, big brother won't fall for tricks from that kind of woman... Big brother?"

"... Ah? Did you call me?" I only just heard Yun Chang calling me, and straightened my back.

When Yun Chang saw me like this, she seemed to have simmering anger for some reason.

"So in the end it's still..." Yun Chang said as she fondled her breasts, and got even more angry, "Damn it, that woman's are bigger than mine..."

"I'm really angry, but for some reason I want to cry even more!"

Yi De looked at Yun Chang and ran off crying when she finished.

"Ah! Little sister, I did not mean it that way."

"Eh? Eh? What's going on? I can't see very clearly so I don't understand." Hua Tuo was squinting as she looked all about.

"Maa, you don't need to understand. It's messy enough as it is."

I felt heat as I touched my face. Could it be that I really fell for it.

... Not good, too dangerous.

"Eh?" Hua Tuo, free of all conflict and worry, innocently bent her head to the side.

"That woman must leave!"

"Un, after seeing her this morning and observing her this afternoon, I can conclude that this woman is far too shameless and it's best for her to leave."

Miss Inspector had gone to take an afternoon nap. And Yi De and Yun Chang had pulled me to the front of the inspector's room for a small meeting.

But why here?

"I don't have any strong feelings about that." I said as I glanced at the Inspector's room. "And isn't she leaving tomorrow anyway? Just bear with it for now."

I too had observed her actions this afternoon and besides some morally unrestrained acts, she didn't engage in any wrongdoings and so I felt I had no reason to whip her. As for her personality, we just have to bear with it for a bit.

Of course, this was definitely not because I had some kind of ideas in my head so please don't misunderstand.

"But for some reason, I keep getting an ominous feeling..." Yun Chang pondered with a frown. Just then a minor official came by.

"Oi! Come over here for a bit."

On hearing me call him, the official jogged over.

"Un? What's everyone doing here?"

"Maa, there's something I want to ask..." Yi De said as she looked away. "What's up with that Inspector? You're an old hand here so tell us about her."

"Lord Inspector? Isn't she a pretty good person?" On mentioning the inspector, the official turned red instantly. "But Lord Liu, you really are lucky."

"Eh? Lucky?"

I pointed at myself in confusion.

"Just one week after assuming your role and it's that Inspector who came. Judging from how it was this morning, she seems to favour you greatly so tonight she will most likely..."

"What?"

"Most likely what?!" Yun Chang asked with even greater anxiousness.

"That, that is, of course come to spend the night with you."

On hearing that, I froze.

"Haa!?"

What kind of logic is this? And we only met once, could it be that love at first sight is real?

"Why does my big brother have to sleep with that bitch!"

"What is wrong with that woman! Why does our big brother have to sleep with her?!"

Similar words came from my angry little sisters, but why are these 2 so much more anxious than I am?

"General Guan, General Zhang, you all should have heard about bribing right." The official said. Yi De and Yun Chang looked at each other and nodded. "Well then, that's simple. Actually Lord Liu sleeping with the Inspector is a form of bribery, except you are giving your body instead of money."

"When is there such a thing!"" This time it was the exact same words from both mouths.

"Isn't it a good thing. That Inspector is so sexy and beautiful. I would gladly offer myself up if I could."

Why am I getting more and more scared the more I hear about this?

"Alright, go back to your business for now." I quickly chased the official away as I could see my little sisters consumed by the flames of anger and was afraid he might be collateral damage.

"... I want to beat her up." Yi De said in a low voice.

Ah... These words of Yi De are really dangerous and it feels like something is about to come true.

"No, we mustn't use force as much as possible." Yun Chang said as she ran her fingers through her hair. "But for the sake of protecting big brother, we have a duty to talk with her about this."

Protect me? Protecting my virginity you mean?

"... Alright, I'll do my best to solve this with words." Yi De breathed in deeply, and out.

Just then, the Inspector's room door opened and the still-sleepy inspector walked out.

Oh no, did she hear everything?

"Un?" She saw Yi De who was sitting on the stone rail outside her room and said completely without thinking, "Why is there a flat chest sitting here?"

Almost immediately I could hear the sound of a temple vein bursting.

"Escaping up to this far should be good enough." I looked around and realised we couldn't see Anxi county city anymore.

"Hai~~ In the end we resorted to violence." Yun Chang rubbed her forehead. "Even though we agreed to use words to get our point across."

"But, but... *Shiku*... She said I was..." There were still trails of tears on Yi De's face and she still hadn't recovered from the trauma before. "And there was also a weapon lying conveniently around."

"What is the matter? I was still having a nap when you all woke me up." Only Hua Tuo was calm as she rubbed her eyes.

"... Hua Tuo, I have to ask. If I used such a thick whip on a person with

barely any clothes, and in quick succession for over 10 times. How long will it take for that person's wounds to recover?"

"Why are you asking this out of the blue? Un... Though there won't be any issues, but such wounds would probably leave scars."

Ah, that really is terrible.

Miss inspector, I'm so sorry. In a way, this could be said to be a necessary plot event. If I get another chance, sleeping together for one night is— No, nothing.

(TL: In the original, the inspector had been disrespectful to Liu Bei and had tried to get some commoners to accuse him of injustice and thus extract bribes from Liu Bei. These commoners refused and were whipped by the inspector. Zhang Fei got wind of this and whipped the inspector.)

"What now? We did manage to bring the few hundred troops we raised originally with us." Yun Chang said to me.

I turned around to look, and saw familiar faces everywhere.

"We'll do what we always have, walk first think—"

"Xuan De! ~~~~~"

"Un? Why do I hear someone calling me?"

"Xuan De? It really is you!" I looked back and saw a girl clad in white plate riding a white horse running over with a wide smile. The aura I felt from her was at complete odds with what she was wearing.

"You are..." She happily ran to me, and seemed to know me but I have no idea who she is.

"How could you have forgotten me? I'm Gong Sun Zan! Your childhood friend!"

(TL: In the original, they did study together as kids.)

"You are Gongsun Zan?!"

To think Gongsun Zan is a girl... Forget it, never mind.

"That's right. Why, did I mature so much you couldn't recognise me?"

"Haa..."

No, I really don't know you. And speaking of maturity... You're just like how you look, a young girl in her teens.

"Leave that aside first," Her expression took a drastic turn very quickly. "Please help me Xuan De, I'm in trouble."

"... I'll ask first anyway, what is it?"

Upon hearing my question, Gongsun Zan's tears streamed down.

"I'm being bullied by my brigadier general!"

On saying that, Gongsun Zan started wailing.

"... Oi oi oi." I looked at her helplessly and couldn't say a thing.

Though I don't really know you, but being bullied by your subordinate to the extent that you're crying is just... Too pathetic.

Un, I need to be a bit tactful in handling this.

Chapter 8: Don't tell me this is the eve of going to the feudal lord coalition

"They've been pranking me since this morning. I was enjoying my beauty sleep when all of a sudden someone yelled that we were ambushed and I rushed out of my tent wearing my breastplate as pants only to be laughed at."

"Is that so."

I answered blandly.

"And then and then, this afternoon, we were going to continue marching. But my brigadier general said it was too much trouble! I angrily rebuked her and she said a lot of things I didn't understand and somehow I ended up having to run one round in the wilderness. But after running for half a day I realised I never found out how far one round was. Just as I was about to return to my brigadier general to protest this I met Xuan De."

"... It's lucky you met me. And why did you obediently go and run just like that."

From what I can see, you probably won't meet with a favourable outcome even if you go back and protest with that personality of yours.

"That's right, it's good I met Xuan De. You have to help me." Gongsun Zan tugged in my hand, "You have to help me teach that brigadier general a lesson."

(TL: Gongsun Zan speaks in a manner that's a little childish and cute, kind

of like how your girlfriend/wife would when she wants you to do something you don't.)

Why do I have to help...

Hai... But though I don't know her, Liu Bei does, so I have to take it that I know her?

Un, if it's some small fry then it should be okay.

"Who is your brigadier general?"

"Some no name officer, Zhao Yun Zhao Zi Long."

"... I'm afraid I can't help you."

"Why!!"

That freaking scared me.

Maybe Gongsun Zan doesn't know but Zhao Yun is an all rounded talent. He even saved Ah Dou, making fun of Gongsun Zan is nothing.

(TL: Ah Dou is Liu Bei's son's courtesy name. In the battle of Changban (Liu Bei vs Cao Cao) Liu Bei was retreating when his wife and son were lost behind enemy lines. Zhao Yun disappeared and returned later with the 2 of them. Yeah, he just went solo behind enemy lines in the face of tens of thousands of hostiles, found a woman and infant in the chaos of battle, AND brought them both back alive.)

Of course, toying me would sure be easy for him. So it's better not to go,

lest I embarrass myself.

"Come on, come with me, you can just cheer me on from the side."

Gongsun Zan said, and grabbed my clothes like a kid who wouldn't let go of a toy she really wanted.

"Un..." I feel like if I don't agree she will keep dragging this out. "Alright alright, I'll go. But I'll say this first, I can't help you."

"Un un, that's okay. I have the confidence that I can make her speechless." Gongsun Zan said with gusto as she nodded vigorously.

I really wonder where that confidence came from.

"Ah, that's right." I suddenly thought, and pointed to my little sisters. "Before we go, let me introduce you. These are my little sisters, Yun Chang and Yi De."

Yun Chang and Yi De waved in reply.

"Oh~~~ I didn't know that Xuan De's mother was still so energetic and gave you 2 little sisters."

"... They're sworn sisters."

Is she a little soft in the head? Leaving aside Yi De, Yun Chang is and looks about my age so how could we be blood siblings?

"Maa, about the same anyway." What an easygoing fellow. "Let's go, we'll reminisce about good times and reconnect after I teach my brigadier

general a lesson.”

“...” I followed Gongsun Zan with my heart full of doubt.

... Actually I really want to ask a question.

Is it really going to be okay?

“Go and stand outside!”

“Ye, yes!!”

Gongsun Zan told us to wait outside the tent for a bit, and it was really for a bit before she was chased out by a female voice, and she promptly stood stock still outside the tent.

“U, umm... How was it?” I knew how it went but I still had to ask anyway.

“*Shiku*... *Shiku*... It’s nothing, go in first, I need some fresh air..
Shiku”

“... Oh.” I was planning to enter the tent, but I couldn’t bear it and patted Gongsun Zan’s shoulders. “Though calling you a brother isn’t quite right, but my brother I feel for you.”

She didn’t say a word, and only nodded.

Who wouldn’t think she looked pitiful on seeing her?

"Big brother, General Gongsun is far too pitiful."

"I feel there's a need to speak with the officer in the tent. That's no way for a brigadier general to treat her lord."

Yun Chang and Yi De couldn't watch on and do nothing either.

"What happened? I can't see too clearly, and I can only hear you 3 talking plus some stranger's crying."

"Aiya, Hua Tuo, you can just stay here and chat with the crying person."

"Oh, I got it... But where is she?" Hua Tuo looked about.

"Right beside you, you're stepping on her foot."

"Ah! So, sorry."

... Let's leave this aside first. I'm actually very interested in knowing about comrade Zhao Yun as he is likely a future subordinate of mine so the Gongsun Zan now could very well be me in future.

I got a little scared when I thought of this.

Zhao Yun, why can't you settle things nicely.

I entered the tent with my little sisters as such thoughts filled my mind.

"Oh? So we have guests, and my lord never even said a word about this."

There was a single female general inside, and she got up from her stool and walked over to shake our hands once she saw us. "I am Zhao Zi Long of Changshan. Please forgive me for my poor reception."

She got yelled out of the tent the moment she came in, how could she tell you...

"... Ah, it's fine it's fine." We returned greetings as well.

But as expected, this woman is Zhao Yun.

She looked slightly older than me, and had good features, with long eyelashes, upturned eyes and a head of rare golden yellow long hair. On one look, you could tell that she was a majestic and upright person.

And thought she wore silver plate like Gongsun Zan, there was an obvious bulge at the right place on the plate that stood out in stark contrast from Gongsun Zan's plate armour.

"Un? What's the matter? Ah, you're looking at this plate armour of mine." She seemed to have detected my gaze and I quickly shook my head. "This plate armour was forced on me by my lord who likes it for some reason. Is it that bad-looking?"

"Ah, how can that be. It looks much better on you than your lord."

"Is that so. This is the first time someone is praising me besides my lord, who doesn't count." Zhao Yun gave a refreshing smile. "In any case, please have a seat and you can all call me Zi Long."

As she said so, several soldiers brought stools and we sat down.

Thereafter, we introduced ourselves to Zhao Yun.

"Oh~~~ So you are Liu Bei. Actually I've heard of you for a while now, and didn't think I'd see you in the flesh today."

"Haa... Are we that famous?"

"Not exactly. It's because my lord keeps talking about you whenever she can. She always talks about the times when you studied together with her."

"Ah~~ So that's why."

I didn't think that Gongsun Zan was such a good friend, though I don't remember such things.

"But speaking of Gongsun Zan, I have something I have to ask." Seeing the chance to raise the issue, I decided to speak with Zi Long. "Your lord may be a bit silly, but you don't have to treat her like that right? Even I think she is a bit too pitiful." I said in a soft voice.

"About this matter..." Zi Long's smile stiffened and she replied in a soft voice as well. "Actually I'm very worried~~"

"Un? Worried? ... What do you mean?"

"You and my lord go back a long way so you understand how she is. Though she is a good person, her ambitions are too lofty and she is too impatient."

"Haa."

I didn't really think of that, and only thought she was a little silly.

"That's why~~~" Zhao Yun smiled helplessly. "I want to temper her spirits so she can be someone who will accomplish great things."

"Be that as it may, there has to be limits. It seems like even the rank and file are bullying her." Yun Chang said with a frown.

"Hahaha, they aren't bullying her." Zi Long suddenly laughed. "Listen--"

We perked our ears up at Zi Long's suggestion.

"Punished again, my lord?!"

"Never you mind! Do what you're supposed to, go!"

"Aiya aiya, don't say that."

"Come my lord, want some water?"

"... I am indeed thirsty."

"I want to drink too~"

Seems like a conversation between Gongsun Zan and a soldier, though Hua Tuo's voice seemed to feature at the end as well.

"You understand now don't you? Those soldiers are just joking around

with her. The relationship between my lord and the troops is actually very good."

"Hou hou~"

So she's actually very popular.

But leaving aside Gongsun Zan, what surprised me the most was Zi Long. Though what Gongsun Zan had described before was indeed the truth, it was clear that she did not understand Zi Long's intentions. Zi Long is actually a really good person, and beautiful to boot.

"Zi Long, you must have had a hard time too, to have to plot and scheme to develop your own lord like this." I smiled to Zi Long. "You've definitely fulfilled your responsibilities as a brigadier general by doing so much."

"Oh no, those words are too kind of you. Ordering her around is actually quite fun."

So you did have selfish motives behind your acts!

I said in my heart, not daring to voice them out.

"But really, if I'd met a lord like you from the very beginning, maybe I wouldn't have had such a hard time."

"Un? What did you say?" I was too concerned with my tsukkomi inside that I didn't pay attention and didn't hear the last sentence.

"Nothing much."

Zi Long flicked her long golden hair as she smiled, and stood up.

"Un, it's about time."

As she said so, she walked to the entrance of the tent and yelled outside.

"My lord!! Come in."

"Oh~~~" Gongsun Zan hopped in happily. "How was it? Did you enjoy speaking with Xuan De?"

"Un, just as my lord has said. This Xuan De person is good."

"That's right that's right, but his memory isn't so good, and he almost forgot about me."

"Ha, haha, I'm really sorry about that." I don't actually know who you are.

... But that utterly pitiful expression seems to be completely gone... Was she a very bighearted person? Or was she just a bit soft in the head?

"Speaking of which, what does Xuan De plan to do from now?" Gongsun Zan asked with a hop.

"Me?" I turned to look at my little sisters and they immediately gave me a look that said they didn't know. And so I could only give a helpless smile, "... Actually, we haven't decided yet."

"Really?" She seemed to be elated on hearing my words and moved her face right in front of mine. "Then come with me. We're heading to Meng De's camp and all the other feudal lords should have reached. If we start

rushing now, we can make it before nightfall."

Meng De?! It's Cao Cao!!

(TL: Meng De is Cao Cao's courtesy name.)

"What is he gathering people for?"

Though I had an answer already, I still asked anyway.

"Dong Zhuo has entered the capital and controls the emperor, and is abusing his power wantonly. 2 days ago, Meng De issued a call to arms to every feudal lord to gather forces and embark on a campaign as a feudal lord coalition to destroy Dong Zhuo."

"... I see."

As expected.

But that shouldn't be the case... I'd have thought Lu Bu would...

"How about it? Coming?"

"Big brother, let's go. Dong Zhuo has forsaken the law and humanity, we have a just reason to destroy him."

"Un, there's also the matter of Lu Bu who was accused. I hate that Dong Zhuo fellow."

Since Yun Chang and Yi De said this much...

"... Ah, then let's go."

I'd thought that Lu Bu would have dealt with Dong Zhuo already but looks like something went wrong... But that's fine, this way I get to see the legendary Cao Cao.

"Report!!" A signaler came running into the tent. "A general called Lu Bu is asking for an audience with you."

"Lu Bu? Who is that? Never heard of that person." Gongsun Zan said.

"What?! Lu Bu?!" I was shocked and ran out of the tent as soon as I recovered.

A majestic and striking coat armour entered my vision the moment I left the tent.

"Feng Xian?!" I called out her name on instinct.

"Xuan De!"

That person had seen me too, and happily ran over. Looking in the direction she came from, I could only see a single person, Zhang Liao Zhang Wen Yuan.

"We had so much difficulty finding you. We were at Anxi county just now but we only saw a female pervert with whip wounds all over her. She harassed us for half a day before saying that you had left not too long ago, and then we quickly left."

"Ah... You all must have had a hard time, in many ways."

That Imperial Inspector, to think you have an indiscriminate appetite...

"We'd been rushing for more than a day now, not even stopping for food or sleep, to tell you a very important piece of information."

Information?

You've come this far, just to find me?

I'm really flattered.

"What is it?!" I asked anxiously.

"Ah, though we did lose the cavalry platoon." She paused, and then proudly said. "But that Dong Zhuo, was ultimately killed by me... Eh? Xuan De? Why are you squatting on the ground?"

"... Please tell me, when did you kill him?" I asked, as I squatted on the floor, in a voice that even I felt was farcical.

"Yesterday."

Oh my god!! Why was the timing so coincidental?! That means that 1 day after Cao Cao issued a call to arms, Dong Zhuo was dead?! Putting it another way, the Dong Zhuo we are supposed to go and destroy, is already dead?

And the worst thing about this era was that if his subordinates could seal off all news about his death, then how long would it take for us to let the feudal lords know?

I'd thought that Lu Bu didn't kill Dong Zhuo but who knew that it was actually the speed of information that led to this?

And so, because of this tiny issue with technology, or lack of it, we have to go and kill a person who is already dead.

"Xuan De? What's the matter?"

"... No, it's nothing." I waved my hand and gave a tired smile.

What sort of joke is this...

Chapter 9: Don't tell me this is the feudal lord coalition

Because our troops were few, we could only form part of the rearguard when we marched with Gongsun Zan's troops who numbered over 15,000, which made it feel like an actual military campaign. For the sake of explaining the situation with Lu Bu, we had slowed down our pace and were at a more sparsely populated part of the main body.

"Haa?! What the heck is going on?!" Feng Xian answered agitatedly. "I clearly killed Dong Zhuo already, so why is everyone still--"

"That is what I said before, that information was too slow--"

"Oi~ Xuan De? Why are you all so slow~"

Our words were interrupted by Gongsun Zan who was riding at the vanguard and I quickly replied before she came over.

"Ah! It's nothing! I just want to see how your army is organised!"

I waved my hand and Gongsun Zan also waved happily and didn't look over thereafter.

"Speak softer! It's one thing if Gongsun Zan hears it, but if it spreads out then there's trouble to be had."

My feeling of helplessness only grew on seeing Feng Xian's face which showed she clearly didn't understand.

Honestly Feng Xian, I understand what you're saying. But this is like when you return to school after summer with your summer homework all finished and when the teacher asks if everyone has done their summer homework and all your classmates say no, how can you say yes?

By the way, Lu Bu and Zhang Liao have temporarily joined my army as my subordinates in our campaign against Dong Zhuo.

"Why do I have to be softer?! If we tell them now that Dong Zhuo is dead, then everyone won't need to embark on this wasteful campaign right?"

"What about his head then?" Yun Chang asked calmly.

"I didn't have time to chop it off."

"Though I don't want to see it, nor do I feel like chopping off heads is anything interesting, but if you didn't chop it off then nobody will believe you, no?" I said, louder than I was before.

"There's no need for that, we just have to spread it. If the feudal lords will put in effort to verify this, then even if Dong Zhuo's subordinates try to suppress this information, I'm sure the truth will come to light in no time." Yi De said with ease.

"It won't be that easy. I get the feeling that the feudal lord coalition is not something so simple." Yun Chang said as she looked at her glaive.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"I know what Yun Chang means. Instead of destroying Dong Zhuo, the true intentions of the participants in the feudal lord coalition is to take advantage of this situation." I looked at Yun Chang and she nodded in

response. And then I looked towards Lu Bu who had a difficult expression on her face, "Each feudal lord hopes to gain honour and glory through contributing in this campaign, which will facilitate the fruition of their future ambitions."

"Un, what Lord Xuan De says makes sense." Zhang Liao nodded with an impressed look.

"Un..." But Feng Xian still didn't get it.

"What's the matter? Don't believe me?"

"No I don't buy it. Because I don't think that the feudal lords would gather for the sake of something as silly as that." Feng Xian and Yi De said.

Silly? Perhaps from our point of view, it is so but from theirs...

"Then..." I looked at Yun Chang and Zhang Liao cheekily.

Let's have a bet.

"Greetings feudal lords! I am Liu Bei Liu Xuan De and I have come with Gongsun Zan." I ignored Yun Chang and Yi De who tried to block me the moment I entered the large tent for the feudal lords and yelled out. "I am here to tell everyone an important piece of information– That is the fiend Dong Zhuo has been slain by a righteous warrior already!"

...

When I finished, all the ladies and gentlemen in the tent were completely silent. Yi De and Yun Chang also helplessly said in a small voice 'Big

brother, you actually followed through with what you said~~~'

That's right, this bet was to see their reactions after I told them the truth.

No better way to test if something is the truth than by acting it out.

"Everyone, sorry I'm late– Un? Why is it so quiet?" Gongsun Zan who just walked in blinked and did not understand what was going on.

"Bo Gui~" The one who called out was a woman who looked every inch a rich young mistress who sat right smack in the centre. She held her chin and looked at us with disdain, "As coalition leader, I Yuan Shao shall forgive your tardiness, but why did you have to bring a lunatic with you huh~~~"

(TL: Bo Gui is Gongsun Zan's courtesy name.)

On hearing this, the tent erupted in laughter.

... Just as I expected.

"Eh? Eh? What's going on?" Gongsun Zan was still looking around frantically and thought that they were laughing at her. "Is there something comical about my armour?"

The one sitting in the center was Yuan Shao. Her dazzling golden hair was tied in a double ponytail and her eyes held a scornful look beneath her long eyelashes. She held a small folding fan in her hand which was used to issue commands and she wore a set of rare and expensive jade plate armour.

(TL: I have no idea why it's jade armour, as it is supposed to be for burial

purposes.)

From how she acted and her sex, it was basically the same as I expected and predicted.

"Forget it forget it, come in and sit– Eh eh eh! I didn't allow you to enter, all you brigadier generals get out!"

"Then, at least let Xuan De stay." Gongsun Zan said weakly.

"That lunatic should be the one who should get out the first."

"Wait!"

This time a clear voice interrupted Yuan Shao, and rendered the tent silent.

"Un? Ah, what is it Meng De."

Cao Cao!?

I looked in the direction where the voice came from, and saw a white haired young girl. Her eyes were full of vigor and she was smiling confidently as she folded her arms across her chest.

"That Liu Bei Liu Xuan De has the right to sit here. Don't judge him by how he seems, he has achieved results during the Yellow Turban Rebellion."

"Hou~ I really cannot tell." Yuan Shao said with suspicion on her face. "Then... Make some space."

"Oh, thanks." I turned to Yun Chang to tell them to exit first after giving thanks.

"Xuan De," Cao Cao spoke to me the moment I sat down. "When you mentioned that you know Dong Zhuo is dead, may I ask if you have any evidence?"

As expected, Cao Cao is Cao Cao, and is always prudent and cautious with all matters... But does she really not know that Dong Zhuo is already dead?

"I don't have evidence." I turned to look at Cao Cao's face that was brimming with confidence but could not read anything from it.

"We'll take it as a joke then, please say things when you have proof next time." Cao Cao smiled as she finished, but the other feudal lords did not smile. "Well then, let's have a round of introductions, everyone. Some of you may know each other, some of you may not, but let's have everyone know each other starting from now."

Most of the generals present were small fries and though a number of them were women as well, it's not really something that bothers me anymore. What really surprised me was that Sun Jian was actually a man. This important information completely destroyed my theories about this world that I had painstakingly accepted and constructed before.

"I am the Tiger of Jiangdong, Sun Jian Sun Wen Tai. I look forward to working with all of you." Sun Jian wasn't old, but he wasn't a youngster either seeing as he looked to be about 30 years of age. If there's one distinguishing feature about him- It would be his love of bragging about his children. "I don't think anyone here knows how lovely my 2 daughters are. I wanted to bring them at first but it can get a bit chaotic and there's nothing fun here so I didn't let them come, hahaha."

What are you taking this for, an overseas trip...

"Haa~~~ Alright alright," Yuan Shao said as she yawned and clapped her hands a few times. "Let's leave it at that for today. Tomorrow, we march to Sishui Pass. That is all, disperse disperse~~~"

(TL: Sishui Pass is actually another name for Hulao Pass, but these names are often misunderstood as 2 places, and even the original author of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms got confused over this.)

It was as though everyone was waiting for this moment, and everyone quickly left the tent.

I left the tent as well, and was greeted by the sight of a fuming Feng Xian.

"What do you think? I told you right, that no one would believe it. Even if they did believe it, no one would admit it." I told Feng Xian sincerely.

"But Xuan De, you did not tell me that Yuan Shao was here too. If I knew, I would have charged in--"

"I was afraid of you charging in and slaying her which is why I didn't tell you. Don't be so reckless okay~~~" I smiled to Feng Xian.

Looks like getting Feng Xian to stay outside from the very beginning was the right decision since the accuser Yuan Shao was there. If she had cut down Yuan Shao, things would have been terrible.

"Un... I got it, I'll bear with it for now."

"Big brother, what do we do now? Do we follow these feudal lords?" Yun

Chang followed up with a question.

"We'll follow them for now. I want to see how this trainwreck ends... What about you 2, Feng Xian?"

Feng Xian thought for a bit before replying with a helpless smile, "For us, we have nowhere else to go anyway so we will stay here for now as Xuan De's subordinates. Though it depends on whether Xuan De thinks we are worth the trouble or not."

"What trouble are you talking about? It was fate that brought me and Feng Xian together."

I even accepted Zhang Jue.

"Wh, what, do you mean about being brought together by fate..." What was up with Feng Xian? This is the first time seeing her face turn red.

"Un? Speaking of which, where is Hua Tuo?"

"Ah, she went to sleep first, with Yi De." Yun Chang said as she held her forehead.

... They really are kids huh~~~

"But it's getting late anyway so we should go to sleep as well."

"Un, I'm exhausted after these 2 days." Feng Xian returned one sentence before wearily entering her tent. She definitely hasn't had much sleep these few days.

"I'm not too tired yet. I'll be chatting with Wen Yuan for a bit."

"Un, recently all I talk about with Yun Chang is Lord Xuan De. The more I learn about you, the more I feel that Lord Xuan De's side is where I and my lord belongs." Zhang Liao said to me, and seemed to be in high spirits.

"Haa, that's great."

I think that if Cao Cao were to hear that line of Zhang Liao's, she would probably cry.

(TL: In the original, Zhang Liao surrendered to Cao Cao after Lu Bu was defeated and became one of Cao Cao's greatest generals.)

After seeing off Yun Chang and Zhang Liao, I decided to take a walk myself as well, when—

"Oi, Xuan De!~~~"

"Un? ... Meng De? Why are you here?"

Turning around, I saw Meng De walk over slowly, with a smile on her face.

"I couldn't fall asleep. How about it? You have some free time?"

"Un, I don't have anything pressing at hand."

"Then accompany me on my walk. I have something to discuss with you." Meng De grabbed my hand and pulled me along.

Cao Cao was looking for me... What could it be?

"I don't know where you got wind of it, and I don't know whether you knew what you should have done. Whatever the case, how could you have charged right up to everyone and told the truth?" Meng De complained to me.

"... So in the end you did know. About Dong Zhuo's death."

"Maa, I knew it only this morning. But the fact is, the things that have been set into motion cannot be stopped. That is the conclusion I have arrived at." Meng De smiled as she held her chin with one hand and counted the stars with the other.

"So everyone here has their own goals in joining this campaign?"

"Maa, you don't have to put it in such a bad light. If it couldn't achieve their goals, who would participate in such an arduous and thankless task."

... That is to say, Meng De knew this but still gathered the feudal lords?

"And you? Did you issue a call to arms to advance your own goals?"

"No, I issued the call to arms with the intention of saving the Han royal family." Meng De's smile faded as she said this, before reappearing with a tinge of helplessness. "But who knew that Dong Zhuo would be killed shortly after I did so. What a joke this is."

I think so too.

"But Xuan De is quite the general huh~~ To have gathered such excellent subordinates." Meng De said with a meaningful smile.

"Ah, I'm not that impressive." As I said so, I remembered the letter from Cao Cao that day. "... Meng De, just how much do you know?"

(TL: The letter he received from Cao Cao that led to him being Prefect of Anxi.)

Even if Meng De was nearby then, to have investigated my name and predict my movements in such a short time...

"Keke, I know as much as you think I do."

"..."

"Don't worry don't worry, I don't mean anything by that. Just a whimsical reply... Don't look at me with such obvious probing eyes."

"... Then do you know who killed Dong Zhuo?"

"About that..." Meng De's pace seemed to have been interrupted by this question as she didn't reply immediately. "Could it be that Xuan De has an idea of who it could be?"

Which means she doesn't know, not that it's strange. Feng Xian was only an unknown warrior before the battle at Hulao Pass. Moreover, it looks like there won't be a battle at Hulao Pass here.

"About that, I have an idea of who it is if you think I do." I replied her in the same fashion as her.

Meng De looked at me quietly, before laughing.

"Kekeke, you really are interesting. ... Good, I like you." As she said those meaningful words, she tied up her soft, smooth white hair into a ponytail. "Whatever the case, let's not talk about Dong Zhuo's death for now and take one step at a time."

(TL: This like is not the love kind. Cao Cao, here and in the original, greatly admires talented people. Despite being a paranoid person, he has always placed great emphasis on recruiting and retaining talented subordinates.)

"I was thinking of that as well."

"Keke." Meng De laughed. "It's pretty late, let's go to bed. We still have to march tomorrow."

"Un, good night."

"Good night."

As I looked at Meng De's back disappear into the night, my anxiousness from before was no longer there and was instead filled with calm.

Oh well, we have a long way to go.

The next day, we arrives in Sishui Pass.

And on the walls of the city at Sishui Pass were very alarming words written in large font– Revenge for the death of Grand Master Dong.

(TL: Grand Master is a court rank. I can find translations for most court ranks but military ranks are difficult to find so I use modern ones if I have to.)

On seeing this, I instinctively looked towards Meng De who realised that I was looking at her and gave me a stiff smile.

I then turned to look at my little sisters and Feng Xian and Zhang Liao, who also returned helpless looks and stiff smiles. Only Hua Tuo was asking what was written on the walls.

Hua Xiong!! You bastard, now you've done it! Why did you have to do this!

(TL: Hua Xiong is a general serving under Dong Zhuo, and is the first one to be sent to Sishui Pass to defend it against the coalition army.)

— Take one step at a time.

Just like Meng De said, is taking one step at a time all we can do?

Chapter 10: Don't tell me this is the battle at Sishui Pass

Could we really take things step by step? Of course not.

If you ask why, well the answer would be because our coalition leader is Yuan Shao.

And I must say... I overestimated this bunch of feudal lords.

"Re, retreat!! Re-convene back at camp!"

Yuan Shao's first reaction to seeing those words on the wall was to frantically call for a retreat. Her expression was as though the heavens had betrayed her.

By the way, the speed at which we retreated was so swift that it was several times the speed at which we were marching forth at.

"Big brother, what do we do now? It was truly unexpected that it would be Dong Zhuo's side who would expose this first." Yun Chang said, her stiff smile still on her face.

"Everything should be settled now. After we go back to camp, we will probably have a last meal together before we disperse." I said despairingly. "But that's not bad in a way. No one had the right intentions when joining this campaign so it would have been weird if it went well."

"But from what we've seen at Sishui Pass, though I've killed Dong Zhuo, his forces seem to be holding strong. Shouldn't the coalition march in and

clean them up? Why does Xuan De think that the coalition will disperse?"

"Dong Zhuo is dead so the honour of killing the leader of the traitors is gone. All there is are small fries who simply aren't worth the effort for the feudal lords." I stretched my back which hurt from riding the horse. "And I feel that Dong Zhuo forces will destroy each other anyway even if nobody bothers to clean them up."

Now we have to wait and see how it goes. Dispersing the coalition immediately, just like that, is the most foolish option. Anyone with half a brain would appoint some feudal lords to continue the campaign, and then disperse the rest. This would allow most people to save face.

"Oi!! Xuan De!! Did you see it? The words on the wall just now! It said that Dong Zhuo is dead!!" Gongsun Zan rode up to me, and excitedly told me this news that everyone already knew.

"Ah, they were so big. How could I not have seen it."

"Lord Xuan De doesn't seem to be very surprised at this huh." Zi Long said as she studied my expression.

"Maa, I am surprised..." Surprised that they would declare it to the world. "But Dong Zhuo being dead isn't something terrible after all."

"What Xuan De said is right. Now I can go back to my hometown. No matter where I go, my hometown is still the best." Gongsun Zan said happily.

"Un, though I feel that my lord is a bit short-sighted, not every feudal lord will think the same as Lord Xuan De and my lord." Zi Long said with frankness as she looked at me with a sharp glance, her golden hair bobbing along as she rode.

"I understand what you mean to say, but now that it's been declared like that, they can't pretend that it isn't there and continue to march under the banner of the campaign to destroy Dong Zhuo right?"

I and Gongsun Zan were the latest in returning to the large tent for the meeting.

The moment we stepped into the tent, we heard crying everywhere, almost like we were at a funeral.

"Dong Zhuo... How could he have died just like that!!"

"That's right, I can remember how we were happily joking about when we first met, that was just a few years ago? And he's now..."

"Maa, life and death is all destined. We can't force it."

... These fellows, why the hell are they crying over him?

This is too much of a farce, you can see that all their sorrowful words mean one thing 'How am I supposed to achieve honour and glory now that you're dead huh?~::~'

"Meng De," I crept over to Meng De who was sitting quietly and asked, "What happens now?"

"... Maa, since the other side doesn't want to hide it, then there's no need for us to do so." I sighed together with Meng De. "We should be dispersing soon, so no need to worry. I'll march on with my own troops to clean up Dong Zhuo's forces. No matter what, we can't let them keep a hold on the emperor..."

"Everyone! Don't be tricked!" Before Meng De could finish, Yuan Shao, who had been silent since I entered the tent, declared with strength in her voice as she opened her folding fan.

"Eh?" I raised my eyebrows.

"... Hnn hnn, looks like it isn't over yet." Meng De seemed to be delighted.

This Yuan Shao, what does she want to say?

Only when we were all silent did she continue.

"We've all been tricked by that Dong Zhuo who spread false information in the hopes that we would underestimate the remaining forces and disperse the coalition! And so he would then proceed to destroy all of us, one by one." Yuan Shao said as she slapped the table. "Based on my analysis after years of experience, there is no way that Dong Zhuo is dead. It must be false information."

The tent went quiet, before a thundering applause resounded.

"This Yuan Shao... Is she a fool! How can she not believe it even at this point..."

"That's right that's right, we nearly got tricked by him!"

"Good thing our coalition leader is here or we would have been had by that old thief Dong."

"Un~~~ Un~~~~ Praise me more, I can handle it~~~" Yuan Shao revelled in the praises showered on her by everyone in the tent.

I didn't have the mood to clap, and only looked on at the feudal lords who were kissing Yuan Shao's ass and that rich young mistress who was lapping it all up.

But Meng De seemed to be clapping very happily.

"Maa, there isn't actually anything wrong with Ben Chu's analysis. According to her explanation, Dong Zhuo is still alive, and then all problems will be resolved." Meng De said before sighing resignedly again. "To be honest, Ben Chu's move was brilliant. This way, the meaning behind this coalition still remains. Ben Chu was probably pondering hard on this all day before she came up with this plan."

I, however, felt that she said these things without considering it that far.

"..." This time, it was my turn to sigh. "Speaking of which, Yuan Shao's territory should be quite expansive, she has a very high court rank, and her relationship with Dong Zhuo should be quite good. Why is she participating in this campaign?"

"I've known Ben Chu for a long while now so I understand the personality of that rich young miss. To be honest, her driving force is the desire of vainglory." Meng De looked at Yuan Shao. "She doesn't want for territory, honour, or Dong Zhuo. What she desires is this position of coalition leader. Though it is a temporary and made-up position, she feels an extraordinary sense of achievement from assuming the role."

(TL: In the original, Cao Cao was childhood friends with Yuan Shao. And they were close enough that Cao Cao cried bitterly at his grave when he made it to the heart of Yuan Shao's territory, some time after Yuan Shao died a natural death.)

"... What a nasty personality." I said weakly after hearing Meng De's explanation.

This Yuan Shao sure likes to seek trouble.

Seeming satisfied, Yuan Shao raised her fan and declared with a vibrant expression.

"Good!! Let's march forth once more!"

"What's with that, who's willing to go first?!" Yuan Shao asked with a frown, her good mood completely washed away as she looked ahead at Hua Xiong's troops.

I looked at Hua Xiong as well, and he seemed like a normal general, his sex matched and he looked very very ordinary. The only thing out of the ordinary was his white funeral garb and that he was crying.

Maa, even Qin Hui was said to have 3 friends. For Dong Zhuo to have some loyal followers wouldn't be too strange.

(TL: Qin Hui was a chancellor and traitor of the Song Dynasty which eventually led to its downfall. He orchestrated the torture and eventual execution of the hero Yue Fei then. For this, iron statues were made of him and his wife to kneel before Yue Fei's grave, and to this day people still spit on his statue, so much so that they had to put a notice for people saying that the iron used to make the statues is innocent.)

(TL: Dong Zhuo was supposedly a truly evil tyrant who did things that would have made the Japanese and German Nazis blush. On top of complete disrespect for the royal family (something unthinkable then), he supposedly killed all male inhabitants in the capital, executed many public servants and relatives of the coalition army, and created hyperinflation when he melted all bronze objects to make coins to fund the construction of his citadel. Finally, when he was forced to retreat from the capital, he forced all inhabitants to march with him and he burned down the capital and palace.)

"Big brother, let me go."

"Don't be so hasty, Yun Chang, wait for a bit. Let the other feudal lords send some small fries up first."

"Un? But why?"

"Maa, let's see how things go first."

Yun Chang wore a questioning look at my reply, while I surveyed the other feudal lords... Seems like everyone is waiting for someone else to act as expected.

"Big sister!" This time, a voice came from where Yuan Shao was. "Let my servant go."

I looked over and saw a little girl, who looked, dressed and spoke in a manner that made her the spitting image of Yuan Shao, walk up to Yuan Shao.

Big sister? Could it be that this little rich young miss is Yuan Shu?

"Oh, it's my little sister. good! Sound the drums!!"

Yuan Shu threw out her hand and a general stepped out of her army's formation and headed for the enemy.

Dong dong dong, 3 beats.

... Eh, what a pitiful sight!

"Report!! Yu She has been slain."

(TL: In case it isn't clear, they are sending generals 1v1 against Hua Xiong. This practice is actually legit.)

"Get back in line courier! I'm not in a tent and can see very clearly what has happened so no need to report." Yuan Shao seemed to be in a bad mood and turned to a livid Yuan Shu. "Little sister, your servant doesn't seem very dependable huh~~~ If my 2 servants were around, that small fry uncle would be nothing for me."

"... Hmph! Big sister is an idiot!!" Yuan Shu yelled and ran off crying.

"... Did I say too much?" Guilt appeared on Yuan Shao's face and broke through her usual disdainful look. "No that cannot do!! I can't leave my little sister all alone in the camp... All forces! Return with me to placate my little sister!!"

"~~~~~"Yes!!!!!"~~~~~

Huh?! How can you be so selfish, that guy Hua Xiong is still out there! How can you leave high and dry standing there? And why are the feudal lords all so obedient!!

"Ah, that's right." She seemed to have thought of something, and said. "Before we leave, I'd like to ask everyone, who amongst you all would be willing to stay and slay Hua Xiong for me?!"

... As expected, no one was willing to shoulder that responsibility.

The main body had already left, this was the same as asking who would be willing to lead the rearguard. But that was such a thankless and perilous job...

"This general is willing!" Yun Chang accepted the mission.

"Alright, that's one." Yuan Shao agreed to it without even bothering to look over.

"Yun Chang!? Didn't I tell you to wait?"

"I understand, big brother is afraid of me getting injured. Don't worry, I'll be fine."

N, not really...

"I'm not returning either. Except for my daughters, I don't entertain other children." Sun Jian said resolutely, completely ignoring his officers' protests.

"Stay then, uncle Sun Jian." Yuan Shao didn't seem very happy hearing Sun Jian's words but agreed to it easily anyway.

(TL: They aren't really relatives. It's kind of like an -oji-san honorific, except it is much easier to translate into English than it is for Japanese honorifics.)

"Excuse me coalition leader." A girl with a weak personality came up to Yuan Shao anxiously. "My subordinate, Pan Feng, his horse won't move for some reason, can I please ask for another horse from the coalition leader.."

"Ah, then just let that Pan whoever stay."

... Looks like she doesn't care who it is who stays.

"Ah?! No! ... Pan Feng! Pan Feng! Don't faint! How can you die before even facing the enemy?!"

"... Maa, in any case please be careful Yun Chang." I don't have the leisure to care for others, and am more concerned with Yun Chang.

"Un, don't worry big brother. I'll definitely return to big brother's side with Hua Xiong's head." Yun Chang looked at me with unwavering eyes and gave me a cute smile.

"No need to bring the head, just yourself is good enough."

After I said so, Yun Chang joined Sun Jian and some fainting person and headed for Hua Xiong with their troops in tow.

"Big sister should be okay right, why don't I go..." Yi De said worriedly.

"She'll be fine. No matter how serious her injuries are, even if she's dead, I can save her for sure."

Hua Tua why do you have to say such ominous words huh...

Maa, I'm not too worried actually. The 3 who are most capable of slaying Hua Xiong have stepped up so it shouldn't be a problem.

(TL: In the original, Sun Jian got defeated by Hua Xiong and Pan Feng got slain. Guan Yu defeated Hua Xiong in minutes. You might think this is a

spoiler, but this is required information to fully appreciate what happens next.)

After returning to the encampment, Yuan Shao insisted on all of us performing for Yuan Shu. No one was willing naturally but due to the pressure she applied on all of us, we had no choice and some performed martial arts while others did calligraphy.

Of course, Yuan Shu was not interested in any of these.

“Report!!~~~”

Just when we were all stuck in this predicament, a military courier came rushing in to the tent.

“Un? Has another of our generals been slain?” Yuan Shao didn’t seem to believe there was any good news.

“No, it’s good news!” The military courier seemed elated. “The general called Guan Yu has slain Hua Xiong!”

The tent erupted into cheers the moment everyone heard him.

“Good!! I just knew there were talents amongst us!” Even Yuan Shao seemed delighted and opened her fan as she gave praise.

On hearing this, I was greatly relieved.

“Xuan De, Yun Chang really is a hero huh~~~ My Zi Long really can’t compare at all.” Gongsun Zan said with a smile.

"It's not me being humble, but I really think Zi Long can match up to Yun Chang."

But as expected, the matter of settling Hua Xiong was accomplished by Yun Chang.

"Then in that case, we should have a celebration." Meng De smiled confidently as always, and called over a soldier. "Warm up a bowl of wine for General Guan's return..."

"Report!!~~~" This time, another military courier came rushing in.

"Un? What's the matter now?"

"Good news, General Sun Jian has slain Hua Xiong!!"

"Haa?! Uncle Sun Jian slew Hua Xiong?" Yuan Shao walked over to the first military courier, "Didn't you say Guan Yu did it?"

"Report~~~~" Before the first military courier could even reply, a third came rushing in. "General Pan Feng has slain the enemy General Hua Xiong!"

The tent became deathly silent at this moment. Everyone looked at everyone else, not a single person dared to utter a word.

"My god~~~" In the end, Yuan Shao broke the silence and sighed. "Just who the fuck slew Hua Xiong huh~~~"

... The rich young miss was actually driven to the point of using vulgarities.

Chapter 11: Don't tell me this is the slaying of Hua Xiong

Alright, all of you just stand there.” Yuan Shao sat in a seiza position and looked at the 3 suspects who were said to have slain Hua Xiong with a tired look. “Now you 3, did the 3 signallers tell the truth? Did all 3 of you slay Hua Xiong?”

“Un... If we look at the result, yes.” Yun Chang said first.

“Hou~~~ So who exactly is the one who killed Hua Xiong huh?”

“... That is...”

“... We can't explain it very well either...”

“Not me! Not me!”

Yun Chang and Sun Jian said very ambiguous words after looking at each other while Pan Feng was frantically denying it and waving his hands about.

Speaking of which, wasn't Pan Feng a big burly man? He looks just like a bishounen gigolo here.

“Aiya, this Pan Feng really is too embarrassing.” Standing beside me was the tender lord of Pan Feng who had tried to get him a new horse before—Han Fu. Because she couldn't stand Pan Feng's embarrassing display, she looked away.

"This is bad," Gongsun Zan said with concern. "I've heard that Yuan Shao hates thieves the most, And there definitely has to be only one person who slew Hua Xiong. As for the other 2... They might be subjected to severe punishment."

"Un... That really is bad..." I gripped my hand tightly, and stepped out of where the rest of the feudal lords were gathered and said. "Coalition leader, could you be mistaken with your judgement? By right, one should be questioning the signallers since it is they who reported this."

"Ah? Who are you? What right do you have to say such things to me?" Yuan Shao was mad and did not listen to my words at all. "One honour, but 3 people vying to claim it, where is their common decency!"

"But this..."

"Coalition leader, I beseech you to wait before bestowing judgement upon us, and listen to our side of the story first." Sun Jian said.

"... Hmph, go on."

"Un, then first is me..."

-- And so Sun Jian began recollecting what happened.

"This isn't fair!! What the hell is this huh?!" Hua Xiong's tears were flowing endlessly, and as a fellow man I felt utterly disgusted. "On what grounds do I have to fight the 3 of you huh? And anyway your troops are almost all gone, why did you all stay, just leave and it will all be over, no?"

"Oh, then we'll just--"

"General Pan Feng, don't run," I grabbed onto Pan Feng's arm and didn't let him leave. "Even if you say it like that, we are still the rearguard after all and are obliged to fight with you."

"Fight with me? Alrigh then, archers at the ready!!" As he said so, Hua Xiong prepared to let loose arrows upon us.

"No, what I mean is..."

"You despicable villain!!!" From the side, a loud roar came from an unknown woman which scared not just Hua Xiong but I as well. "To let loose arrows during a general's duel? Do you still have the pride of a warrior general huh?!"

"This isn't actually a duel..."

"No more words!!!" At which Hua Xiong started with an 'Hii!' and backed up. "As your peer who upholds the values of loyalty, righteousness and compassion, I Guan Yu Guan Yun Chang order you right here and now to get your troops to retreat back to the city!! And then let us have a proper contest!!" The woman flicked her hair back and swung the Green Dragon Crescent Moon Sword and pointed it straight ahead. My eyes seemed to be playing tricks on me as I seemed to see a red dragon coiled around that woman.

"... But... But that is..."

Aiya aiya, to be forced back by a woman to such an extent.

Forget it, though he is an enemy, let me help out comrade Hua Xiong a bit here.

"Umm Hua Xiong. I understand what you mean, you mean to say that

fighting us 3 alone is not fair right?"

"Ah, right, right. That's what I mean." Hua Xiong seemed to see the light of hope as he looked at his enemy, me.

"Then why don't we do it this way." I stretched my hand out and pointed toward some ordinary soldiers behind Hua Xiong. "You, and you, what are your names?"

"Me? My name is Zhang Ji." "I, I'm Li Meng."

"Alright, step out the 2 of you... Aiya, come out." Only then did they step out and then I gestured to them with my hands. "How about that, now it's 3 vs 3 right."

"Ah? Bu, but these are just 2 ordinary soldiers..." Hua Xiong seemed very dissatisfied.

"What's the matter, are you looking down on them?"

(TL: Sure, it's fair to send 2 ordinary soldiers to face the living tank that is Guan Yu and the legendary general Sun Jian. Very fair.)

"Ah? Th, that isn't it..." He turned to look at his troops behind and seemed to be considering something for a long while before he gave a sigh. "Alright, the rest of you go back, the 2 of you stay... Don't shiver, if you all win, I'll bestow a fortune on the 2 of you."

"But this..."

"But what but?! Even I can't 'but' as well. Quick, go."

"And so I faced off against Hua Xiong. He didn't even last till a second round before I cut him down." At these words, the feudal lords started whispering amongst themselves again. "And the other 2 were just ordinary soldiers as expected and were cut down in short order by that female general."

"Wh, what about my Pan Feng?" Han Fu hurriedly asked as she hadn't heard about Pan Feng's part.

"As for him... He just sat at the side..."

"... That idiot!"

But if it's like this...

"Then the one who slew Hua Xiong is you right? Uncle Sun Jian?" Yuan Shao said.

"About this..."

"Un, let me continue on from here." Yun Chang took a step forward and said solemnly. "After that, it went like this..."

-- And so Yun Chang began recollecting what happened.

Lord Sun Jian was clean and thorough while on my side the 2 soldiers were easily dealt with as well. Huu, well then it's all settled.

"Let's go, back to camp." Lord Sun Jian said relaxedly.

“Un un, finally we can return.”

“Lord Pan Feng, don’t cry. As warrior generals, we can’t cry on the battlefield.” I got on my horse whilst consoling Lord Pan Feng. As I looked ahead, I saw that Lord Sun Jian had ridden quite a ways ahead.

I should go too.

“Wait!”

Un? Someone spoke.

“Lord Pan Feng, did you say something?”

“Uiiii!! Th, the corpse is!” This was Lord Pan Feng’s voice...

Then...

“Do, don’t leave... I’m not dead yet...”

Hua Xiong?! He can still stand even after taking such a grievous wound?!

“Stay down! Just lie there, if you do that, you can still live.” I coldly said to him.

I cannot kill an enemy who is unable to resist.

“... Are you humiliating me?!”

“!!”

“I too am a warrior general, how can I not fight to my last drop of blood on the battlefield?!”

... Is that so. So he does have in him the spirit of a warrior huh~~~~
Hai, that was wrong of me.

“Then, please forgive me.” I jumped off my horse and took my stance.

“Good, here I come– Ya~~~~” Hua Xiong charged over unsteadily.

“And thereafter, I sliced him up. Only then did he fall.”

On hearing Yun Chang’s words, several people in the tent were moved to tears by Hua Xiong’s bravery.

“So that is to say, you and uncle Sun Jian killed him then?” Yuan Shao said with irritation in her voice.

“No, actually there is still a continuation.” Yun Chang said and looked at Pan Feng. “Right, Lord Pan Feng?”

“Ah? ... Ah, if you say there is, then maybe there is...”

“Stop pussyfooting around!! Say it, quick!”

Yuan Shao really couldn’t take it anymore and roared at Pan Feng.

"Ah, okay okay okay. I'll say it, I'll say it."

"The coalition leader always bullies our Pan Feng~~~ How hateful." Just before Pan Feng continued, I could hear some words from Han Fu beside me.

-- And so Pan Feng began recollecting what happened.

"Wait General Guan, wait for me!!! I don't have a horse!! Take me with you!! ... Haa... Haa... I can't! I can't catch up!"

Finally we could leave this place, but because General Guan was too hasty in leaving, she didn't hear me at all.

Ahhhh what to do~~~ If at this moment the troops rush out of the city, I'm done for... My lord, looks like it is time for us to part...

"Oi..."

"Un?!!" A voice came from the ground and scared me. I looked over and saw that Hua Xiong was still breathing. "Aiya, just leave me be. Take it that I'm begging you, don't scare me anymore and just die okay?"

"... No good."

"Then lend me a hand, give me a horse and I'll let you live. How about that?"

"I don't want this life. Lord Dong Zhuo has been very kind to me, and I shall follow him."

Aiya, why be so hard on yourself huh~~~

"Stop talking nonsense." I plucked up courage and hoisted Hua Xiong up before shouting to him. "Quick!! Get the people in the city to send a horse! Now!"

Just as I finished, I heard the city gates open.

This time I was truly scared because I thought they were coming to capture me. But who knew that it was just a single soldier who came out and handed me a horse.

"I heard everything from up the walls, and seeing you have no horse, I brought one specially for you. Just look at that fearful look of yours, just leave, we will take care of General Hua Xiong. Don't worry and go."

"... Did you know, brother." Tears streamed down my face as I got up on the horse. "If it weren't for my lord, I would have switched occupations long ago! Anyway goodbye! — Jia!"

(TL: Jia is what the Chinese say to get horses to gallop.)

As I thought, there is still a lot of good people in this world huh.

"Un... Eh! Eh! Eh! General Hua Xiong?! ... Stop!! Stop!! General Hua Xiong's plate is clipped to the horseshoe!!"

"And just like that, by the time I stopped the horse, that person became a messy lump of flesh."

Aiya~~~~ I was wondering why those 3 were so hesitant about saying it. It's actually because it's simply too tragic and they couldn't bear to say

it.

But speaking of which, it really was the combined efforts of all 3 huh...

"This is... Everyone, isn't it awful!?"

"Awful!"

Why the hell?! Yuan Shao why are you doing a cheer?!

"Anyway now that the Administrator of Sishui Pass is dead, we can easily conquer the city." Yuan Shao said as she fiddled with her hair. "Ah, you 3 all deserve merits, and will receive appropriate awards."

After thanking them, Yuan Shao waved her hand and dismissed everyone.

"How was it big brother? I did it."

"Un, but this is a really unexpected outcome..."

I really didn't think that Hua Xiong's life force would be this resilient.

"Pan Feng, good work you idiot."

"Maa, it's nothing much, and it's all thanks to my lord."

"Don't need to be so humble."

There's actually nothing to praise right?! ... Hai, what an idiotic lord-vassal pair.

"Ah, that's right. As for the enemy General Hua Xiong, in remembrance of his peerless bravery, we shall give him a proper burial..." Before Yuan Shao could finish...

"Report!!!"... A signaller came running in- Seriously I'm starting to hate signallers. "Hua Xiong, who is now a bloodied mess, has brought his troops to our entrance and is asking for a duel!"

All feudal lords present all uttered an "~~~~~Aiya~~~"

To actually last to this point....

"That fellow, destroy him!!" Yuan Shao's sorrowful look disappeared instantly and she stood up. "Close off our encampment, and ready our archers!!"

In spite of everyone's protests, Yuan Shao let loose a rain of arrows and finally Hua Xiong died under the torrent of arrows.

Though Hua Xiong did die to the arrows, I went to think about it deeper later. The moment he chose to speak with Sun Jian and the rest and not send his troops forth, he could be considered a dead man already. Though he did waver on this decision, he succumbed to Yun Chang's words, and so dead again. Later, he duelled Sun Jian, dead. Refusing to accept help, dead. Getting trampled by the horse, dead. Gathering all these facts, one can say that Hua Xiong was truly fated to die today... Then in that case, who was the one who killed Hua Xiong?

Chapter 12: Don't tell me this is the cause for the Battle of Hulao Pass

We did a quick and simple funeral for Hua Xiong before proceeding to occupy Sishui Pass.

Upon entering the city, we found the commoners and soldiers all crying and mourning, and the words on the wall 'Revenge for Grand Master Dong' were removed and replaced with 'In remembrance of the brave General Hua Xiong'.

It is really too tragic for such a loved and well-respected man like Hua Xiong to die like that.

The only consolation, and surprise, was that Hua Xiong had instructed the soldiers in the city to surrender Sishui Pass to the coalition upon his death. And because of that, we, the killers of Hua Xiong, were able to enter the city without fear of conflict.

But of course, hateful looks were directed towards us from everywhere... Which made me feel like I was standing on the wrong side, and should have supported Dong Zhuo instead.

But in a way, this implies that good subordinates do not mean a good lord. And it could be said that Hua Xiong was the one who served on the wrong side.

"I'm not planning to stay here for long. Tomorrow morning we march forth to the next checkpoint- Hulao Pass!" Yuan Shao sat on a chair, wearing a tired look as she fanned herself with the folding fan.

Perhaps she can't stand the hostility showered upon us and wants to plunge into the next battlefield?

But then~~~

"Who is willing to stay and occupy Sishui Pass?!"

Silence all around.

"Why is nobody talking huh!" Yuan Shao flicked her hair and roared at us as she stood up.

Everyone knew that staying to occupy Sishui Pass was a meritless yet laborious task. Firstly, staying meant not being able to achieve honour, and secondly the commoners here were extremely hostile, so if anything happened, those who stayed had to be responsible for cleaning up.

And so, it was silent all around once more.

Actually, I was willing to stay but for the fact that the commoners here might be hard to placate. Even if I am Liu Bei, I can't expect everyone to like me just because I'm thought of as virtuous.

"... Then let's do it this way, we will draw straws to decide. Tian Feng, prepare them for me." Yuan Shao called out to a girl who was read who was surprised and let out an "Ah?" before frantically running out of the tent. Yuan Shao sighed at this sight and began complaining. "Really, I can't stand this servant. Slow on the uptake, and unlikable."

Unlikable... Huh?

Leaving aside her judgement of people, this method is not bad and is fair to all.

"Please not me, please not me." Gongsun Zan to my right seemed to be afraid of having to deal with the commoners as well and was silently praying.

"Though I am unwilling to remain here, I am fearful of going onto the battlefield as well..." Han Fu to my left was muttering to herself as well. Though I felt that with that sort of mindset, she might as well go on home.

"I, I'm done." Tian Feng came crashing and falling into the tent with a small box, her book still in hand... What is she reading? I'm pretty curious about that. "Now then, everyone please take one and only look at your own. If you see a red circle on yours, that means you have to stay."

Hou hou~~~ I never thought it would be that simple.

We took out a card from a stack that was neatly arranged in the box.

Speaking of which, she never did say how many cards had red circles did she...

"Alright, everyone has their card." Yuan Shao was the last to take her card, in an ostensible show of authority. "Everyone open their cards, take care not to let others see yours~~~"

I carefully opened it– Red circle.

Maa, that's fate I guess,

After that I glanced around and saw that everyone had uncomfortable looks... What was going on?

"Has everyone seen theirs?" Yuan Shao declared, "All those with red circles on their card, step forward."

I stepped forward, and so did Gongsun Zan and Han Fu on my left and right. I glanced at them, and saw that Gongsun Zan had an expression that seemed to be lamenting her bad luck, and her wasted efforts in praying just now. Han Fu, on the other hand, was looking calm, and speaking to herself in a small voice, "Though this isn't good in its own way, it does have some merits in its own way."

"Un, the numbers match. There are exactly 3 cards with red circles. You 3 will stay then."

I looked at the rest, and found that they all seemed to be relieved.

Though we each had our own opinions on this, we still bowed and accepted the order.

But what a coincidence for all 3 'big prizes' to be given to us 3 seated here.

"That's it for now, keep your own cards. Go and rest after any preparations you need to make. Tomorrow, those who are marching will be marching, and those who are staying shall stay... Dismissed!!"

As she finished, Yuan Shao left with a tired look.

"I didn't think that Xuan De would get it too. Hai, how unfortunate are we~~~" Gongsun Zan complained to me upon the end of the meeting with a helpless smile. "But at least Xuan De is around, if it were only me,

then I wouldn't know what to do."

"Aren't I staying as well?" Han Fu joined in from my side.

"Whether you are around or not makes no difference. Why don't you go and play with your Pan Feng." Gongsun Zan said with dismissively.

"What?! You idiot!! Let me tell you, I'm the Governor of Ji state, and have a good eye for people. My Pan Feng is the greatest general in the world, you all better not look down on him."

And as the conversation went on, it became a fight... These 2 actually have pretty similar personalities huh.

I didn't bother with them any longer and as I exited the tent alone, Meng De walked up to me.

"I say, you really are too honest are you. Leaving aside those 2 idiots, why did you step out as well?" Meng De spouted some inexplicable words the moment she came up to me.

"Ah? I got a card with a red circle so of course I had to step out."

"Hahaha..." Meng De laughed on hearing my words. "Let me show you my card."

She let me come up close to her, and though I felt a little uneasy about doing so but I still went as close as appropriately possible, and Meng De opened the card- To reveal a red circle.

"Un?! You also... Bu, but didn't she just say there were only 3 cards with red circles?"

"Aiya~~~ You saw everyone's expressions when they opened their cards and you still don't understand?"

"... Oh!!" Only then did I get it. "Then it must be that all cards have red circles!!"

Meng De gave a 'shh' and nodded.

"This is what they call fishing for fools. That Tian Feng servant of Yuan Shao's is interesting." Meng De said meaningfully.

Hai... I was completely fooled... To think that all those feudal lords seem so silly usually but who knew they were actually pretty sharp. It's over, I've been relegated to the same level as Gongsun Zan and Han Fu.

"But was it Yuan Shao who thought of this?"

"Ben Chu is not smart. This, I think you should know by now. So she could not have come up with this plan." As her former classmate, Meng De's judgement of Yuan Shao has a lot of weight. "In any case, it's not too big of an issue seeing as you are not the kind of person who desires honours and merits. Staying here and enjoying some peace and quiet is good too."

"But what about the commoners here? I don't think they will be easy to deal with."

"Don't worry, their beloved General Hua Xiong still lives on in their hearts. As long as you don't insult the Hua Xiong in their hearts, there will be no problem." Meng De said, and exited the tent upon finishing.

Meng De.... Even as a woman, is the same intellectual kind of hero huh.

As I thought so, I exited the tent as well.

"Oh, big brother. The meeting has ended huh." On seeing me, Yun Chang, Yi De, Hua Tuo, Feng Xian and Zhang Liao who had been waiting outside came up to me.

"Un, it's ended." I breathed in the night wind. "We'll be staying here and won't be part of the ones marching to Hulao Pass."

"Eh? I still want to fight more battles."

"Don't be too bloodthirsty, Yi De. Peace is the best." Speaking of which...
"Feng Xian, what are you planning to do now? Will you stay with us here or will you follow them to Hulao Pass?"

"I'm still a subordinate of Xuan De for now, so naturally I'll be staying. But why does Xuan De think that I would go with them?"

Well that is the battlefield where you make your main entrance after all...
Although even if I say this, she won't get it.

"Nothing much, I just feel like having you here with me is a waste of your talents."

"Is that so... But I think what I really wish is to see a day where my martial arts will be of no use." Feng Xian said a shocking line, and revealed a smile tinged with sadness. "Though I do have the lust for battle in me, my desire for peace is stronger."

"I see... I must say I have learnt something new about Feng Xian again."

"Maa, maa, it's not much..." Feng Xian seemed a bit shy. Those who always appear strong seem so much cuter when they become shy.

But if it's going to be like this, who is the general guarding Hulao Pass? Besides Lu Bu, I don't know who else is supposed to be at Hulao Pass.

Forget it, a Hulao Pass without Lu Bu is better. That way, it should be an easier fight.

The next day, the coalition army marched out early in the morning while I, Gongsun Zan and Han Fu stayed behind in Sishui Pass.

As Meng De said, as long as we do not provoke the commoners, they don't seem to want to cause trouble.

"Big brother, let's take a walk down the streets." Yi De suggested, and practically everyone who stayed behind was doing nothing, and so everyone agreed,

The city wasn't big, but it was relatively populous, and there were several marketplaces here and there.

So that people couldn't recognise us as individuals belonging to the official army, we specially wore casual clothing.

"I didn't think that this city would be so prosperous. It must be the fruit of General Hua Xiong's efforts." Yun Chang said as she looked about.

A Yun Chang not in her usual green armour coat was a breath of fresh air and I saw her in a new light.

"Big brother, there are sweets there!"

"Yi De, you are getting too excited... I'll buy it for you so relax." Though the modern paper money I originally had on me was not usable, I do have some coins from this era in my pocket.

"But but, this is the first time I've been to a city larger than Zhuo county and Anxi county you know!"

This is just a Pass... It's not as big as a state city. Maa, whatever floats her boat.

But speaking of which, sweets are pretty expensive. As expected, sweets are a luxury good in this era huh.

"Pan Feng, are your injuries better?"

"My lord, this much is nothing."

Walking behind us was Han Fu's group.

"That's good... But Pan Feng, did you even get injured?"

"Wh, what! Zhang He! You, you're just jealous of my achievements!"

"Like I said, what achievements huh~~~"

Zhang He? Zhang He is also Han Fu's subordinate? From her voice alone I can tell she feels helpless at her comrades, and seems like she is responsible for tsukkomis in her group huh~~~

I looked over and there was indeed another girl besides Han Fu.

She was a helmet so I couldn't see her hair but I could see that she had an uncommon beauty and was pleasing to the eyes, Though she did not wear a smile, rather than having a cold expression, it was more like an expression that said that she hated trouble and did not want to bother with anything.

"General Lu Bu! Please don't snatch this puppy from me!"

"No! I saw it first!"

Un? Seems like there's a fight going on.

I can see Gingsun Zan and Feng Xuan arguing at a roadside stall which seems to be selling a puppy... Could it be that they are fighting over it?

"Aiya, my lord, don't be so childish. I did see that General Lu Bu saw it first so just..."

"Zi Long!! How can you speak up for someone else and not your own lord?!"

"It's just a puppy, why don't you give it to her my lord... Umm, I don't like animals very much as well." Zhang Liao said at a distance from the puppy... Is she afraid of dogs?

"Zhang Liao, on this and this alone I will not give in! I've always wanted a dog since ages ago!!" Upon saying so, Feng Xian snatched the dog and hugged it as she rubbed her face against the dog, letting an expression of sheer bliss. "Un~~~ I've decided! This dog shall be named 'Red Hare'"

(TL: No this is not a mistranslation. And if you think it's ludicrous, it's actually the name of the legendary stallion which Lu Bu had. A supposedly legendary horse with a red mane. Yeah, he called a warhorse 'Red Hare'.)

Red! Red Hare! For a dog?!

"No way!! His name should be 'White Horse'!" Gongsun Zan continued to argue.

(TL: Gongsun Zan is known as the 'White Horse General' for an elite unit of cavalry that used white horses exclusively.)

Uwa~~~ Gongsun Zan is the same as always but who knew that Feng Xian would have such a girly side to her.

This era seems to appreciate dogs quite a bit... But in the end it's just a puppy right...

"Big brother, there's a dog there!!,

"... Yi De, even if you say it like when you asked for sweets I can't help you. Look at how intense the competition already is."

"Big brother did you know, there are many benefits to keeping a dog."

"... Yun Chang wipe your nose, your nose is bleeding."

I retract my earlier words... I really did not expect that young women love puppies that much.

“Then why not we do it this way.” Gongsun Zan said angrily. “All those who want the puppy will compete and whoever wins gets the puppy, deal?”

And so, following Gongsun Zan’s suggestion, a strange contest began.

Chapter 13: Don't tell me this is the Battle of Hulao Pass

"That is to say that we let this dog run, and then whoever catches it keeps it?" This was my summary after listening to a long and convoluted explanation by Gongsun Zan.

"Un, that's how it is." Gongsun Zan nodded with a smile. "You can attack or hinder other competitors as well. But to prevent injuries, the only weapon allowed will be a 3 chi long wooden stick."

(TL: Chi is a unit of measurement. 1 chi is about ~30cm.)

So about 1 meter then... Not too long, not too short. Looks like Gongsun Zan has indeed considered things well.

"If anyone gets injured, come find me okay~~~~" Hua Tuo waved from the side.

"And that's how it is, any objections?"

"Nope~~~~" Everyone raised their hands in agreement.

Except for Han Fu's group who have gone somewhere else, everyone including those not interested (me, Zi Long and Zhang Liao) have been forced to join this contest.

"I object!"

Who is it? Who could dare to object at this time? ... Oh, it's the guy selling the dog.

"What if the dog doesn't return? Then won't I lose out?"

"Don't worry, all contestants will give you a deposit." Gongsun Zan suggested without even thinking.

"Un, then I have no objections."

Sure you don't have objections but I do! I don't have that much money!! And why is everyone so willing to spend now? Yi De made me buy sweets for her just now, yet she can pay for this herself.

Hai, no way about this, I just have to borrow from Zi Long...

"I just hate having to spend money..." That was the first time I saw, a truly horrific expression on Zi Long. "Un? Is there anything Lord Xuan De?"

"Ah... No..." How could I ask.

Alright I'll ask Yun Chang... No, I can't, no matter what she is my little sister... That's right, Zhang Liao!

On reaching this conclusion, I walked over to Zhang Liao.

"Zhang Liao... Umm, can you lend me some money first?"

"Ah? But... But I still have to pay for my lord's share hm~~~" So Feng Xian doesn't usually bring money about huh. "... Maa, since you asked..."

"Thank you so much!! Zhang Liao is the kindest to me!" I grasped Zhang Liao's hand and shook it over and over.

"Maa maa, no need for thanks. I'll be very happy if you would shield me from a certain animal that will come flying over later.. Oh? Looks like it's starting."

Un? Wow when did they set up a starting line.

Hopping in the front row was naturally my little sisters, Feng Xian and Gongsun Zan while we 3 were lined up behind.

"Ready!" The merchant put a hand on the dog's collar lock, ready to unlock it anytime now while his other hand held something that seemed like some sort of paper crack to scare it, then- "Go!"

The cracker exploded and the dog raced forward in shock.

Apart from the dog, several beautiful young women with gleaming eyes flew out as well.

— Now entering Gongsun Zan's point of view.

"Damn it, where did it go?"

I, Gongsun Zan, swear by my name that I will definitely get that dog.

But speaking of which, where is Zi Long? She's not behind me?! Really, how am I supposed to compete now? We'll see what I'll do to you when I get back... Un, probably nothing.

Aiya! I can't think of such things now! White Horse (my name for the dog)! Where's my White Horse?

"White Horse?! Where are you?~~~"

"Hmph, calling out like that is a waste of effort!!" A cold voice came from the roof of the building beside me.

Un? This voice is?!

"General Lu Bu!"

I looked up and saw General Lu Bu, who stood on someone's house and ignoring said someone's scolding, surveying the surroundings as she spoke to me.

"I'll praise you for your legs and ears at least. From my experience, Red Hare did indeed escape in this direction."

What experience!! Its nothing but an act! I won't believe in what experience you claim to have, I only believe in my own instincts! And its name is not some Red Hare, its rightful name is White Horse!

"But since I've made it here anyway, there is no reason not to fight for it." I smiled and pulled out the wooden stick.

General Lu Bu stood there silently for a while after hearing my words before saying-

"... Lord Gongsun, are you serious?" Just as she finished, I felt a strong

air current blow past me. “I had planned on letting you go account of you being Lord Xuan De’s childhood friend... So let me ask once more, are you serious?”

Zi Long isn’t here at this time too... No good, I really want to run away...

But, But I–

“For the sake of my White Horse, I will not quit!”

“... You have guts.”

Though I’ve never personally seen her in combat, even I can feel it from her aura– That if she fights seriously, my death will certainly come, and it will be faster than flipping a book.

But! Now both of us wield just a wooden stick, a thin wooden stick at that. This way, we are both in a tough spot.

And so I have a chance to win!

“Well then– Here comes my first blow!~~~~” General Lu Bu flew over from the roof in one jump, and the wooden stick came smashing down, aimed at the center of my forehead.

“Haa!~~~” I yelled out to energise myself and held my wooden stick above my head as I readied myself to take the blow.

Such a simplistic move– I’ll definitely block it!

— *Kacha*

What sound was that! Did someone's stick break? No it was impossible for only one side's stick to break as the sticks all had the same density and hardness... Could it be that both broke?

But if they both did... Why... Why does my forehead feel like it got hit?

Before I could figure it out, my legs gave way and I collapsed to the ground.

"Wh... What..."

... What happened?

"The wooden stick you held up was a hindrance so I used my arm to break it first. Good thing the stick wasn't too thick."

You, You used your arm?!

"But in the end, the winning blow was not really a direct hit. All I did was press down on your head with the arm I used to break the stick and then hit my arm with my own stick. This way you won't have any external injuries and will faint at the most."

No good, I'm losing consciousness... My vision is already dark.

Just that one charge had that much power huh...

"Don't move anymore, Lord Gongsun. Lord Hua Tuo should be here soon to treat you." I could still hear General Lu Bu's voice from my beside my ear. "I'm sorry but I really want that puppy."

As she finished, she ran off and the sound of her footfall grew distant until I couldn't hear it anymore.

... Come to think of it, I really am silly. Why did I think that I have a fair chance if we used the same weapon?

— Now entering Feng Xian's point of view.

Seems like I broke a bone in my forearm...

Breaking the stick was still okay, but that blow I gave myself was probably a little too heavy.

"It hurts..." I moaned in a low voice as I began looking for traces of Red Hare.

"*Wang*!"

(TL: Mandarin onomatopoeia for barking.)

!!

There!

I rushed round the corner and saw the shadow of Red Hare race ahead.

It's turning around the next corner!

But I should be able to see Red Hare again when I reach the next corner!

I sped up as I thought so.

Just then I could feel someone running nearby and when I turned my head, I came face to face with—

“Feng Xian?!”

“Yi De?!”

We both gave each other a shock on seeing each other.

““Hei!!~~~~” And we immediately accelerated the moment we recovered.

Our goal was the same, the Red Hare who was at the next corner and so we ran towards our destination at full speed almost in sync.

“Even if it’s Feng Xian, I’ll face you with everything I have!!” Yi De immediately got into a stance and swung her stick at me, “Haa!!”

“Kuh!!”

... This might be troublesome.

Because my dominant right arm was now injured, I could only block with my left. And to make things worse, Yi De was standing on my right so defending was extremely difficult.

"What happened? Did you injure your right arm?" Yi De quickly understood when she saw the quirks in my stance and asked with concern, "Need me to run to your left side?"

... Yi De really is a good person, and looks out for me quite a bit.

But...

"Your feelings are good enough, but I too have an advantage this way!"

That's right, my advantage was— The next corner was a left turn.

At the speeds we were running at, having a slightly better position would make a world of difference in rounding the corner.

With my position, I can race ahead of her once we turn the corner.

As long as I turn first, and chase up to it first, then I just need to dive towards it and Red Hard will be in my arms.

"... Is that so?" Yi De gave a bright smile on seeing how I was. "Even so I won't lose!"

"That's my line!"

I endured the searing pain in my arm and ignored my hair that was all over the place. In my eyes was only the scene of victory after I turned the corner.

— Now back to my point of view.

"Feng Xian?"

"!!"

Just when the puppy was outflanked and cut off by me and Yun Chang, Feng Xian came running in from the other side of the road.

Her eyes bulged when she saw us, and I could see a clear look of despair in her eyes.

"Oh, Feng Xian, you're here too!" Yun Chang happily called out. "Unfortunately this puppy has been caught by us. I feel bad about it but this puppy is ours."

Just then, Yi De came around the corner as well.

If I think about it carefully, this can be considered as the 'Three Heroes Battle Lu Bu' scene... Though the form is different, the meaning behind it is non-existent, and not to mention I feel really bad for Feng Xian here, this battle should end in our victory.

"I didn't think you would come from the other side, what a miscalculation." Feng Xian lowered her head, and from where I stood I couldn't see her face. "But you haven't gotten the Red Hare yet." She said as she stepped forward.

Un?

"And why is that?" Yuan Chang said calmly and slowly as she raised her wooden stick to defend from any surprise attack by Feng Xian.

"Because," Feng Xian edged closer to the puppy who was very close to us and raised her head. I saw that she was– Smiling confidently. "You haven't caught it yet!"

And she leapt forth as soon as she finished!

"No!!" Yun Chang yelled. "Yi De, grab her quick!!"

"Come here, Red Hare!"

Everyone was shouting at this moment. And it is at this moment that every one of us heard a single sound– *Wang*!

"I really didn't expect that~~~ That the puppy would give a bark and then jump into Feng Xian's arms." Yun Chang said with a helpless smile.

"That's right, looks like we really lost this time." Yi De said with a similar expression.

Though they felt it was a pity, I could tell that they were taking it in stride.

Because they could never win Feng Xian when it came to love from the Red Hare.

"Ow!!"

Hearing tiny yelp, I looked toward Feng Xian who was moaning from pain whilst holding the Red Hare with her left arm.

"How can it not hurt?! Your right arm was thoroughly broken, and that

leap you just did? You landed right on the broken bone... Hai, how reckless can you be!" Hua Tuo said as she treated Feng Xian. "But it's still okay, at least the bone didn't shatter. With my medical techniques, your arm should recover within a week."

"Ah, thanks Lord Hua Tua." Feng Xian said, not once did she stop caressing the Red Hare. "Right, Zhang Liao, where were you? How come I never saw you?"

"My lord! It's all because of my failure to overcome my cowardice and follow my lord that my lord has had to sustain such a grievous wound." Zhang Liao was bawling her eyes out as she looked at Feng Xian, not forgetting to hide from the dog's vision. "It's all my fault, forgive me my lord!"

"Maa, if you're afraid of dogs then just say so. I won't let Red Hare run around you... Ouch!" Feng Xian gave a smile as she winced from pain.

Speaking of which—

"My lord, please use your brain the next time you get into a duel. You know you can't beat General Lu Bu yet you still went ahead anyway. If it weren't for her showing compassion and holding back, you would have been dead by now!"

"Bu, but Zi Long... *shiku*... You didn't manage to keep up..."

"My lord! Please don't try and shirk responsibility and blame others, okay?! If you keep this up, you will never grow up!"

"... *Shiku*... *Shiku*... I, I understand."

The worse off was Gongsun Zan huh~~~ Even her head is all bandaged.

Later we returned to find the merchant but he had run off long ago... I knew we shouldn't have handed him so much money. Now I owe Zhang Liao a fortune!

But come to think of it, this isn't Hulao Pass right? Why did the 'Three Heroes Battle Lu Bu' scene happen...

"Oi, everyone is there!" Just then, Han Fu came running over anxiously. "Lord Liu Bei, Lord Gongsun, we need to get to the city gates fast- Lord Yuan Shao is back!"

"Un? So fast?"

Was Hulao Pass unguarded?

We sprinted to the city gate and saw Yuan Shao who got angry even before we could speak a word.

"I'm so pissed!"

After she said that nonsensical line, she ignored us and entered the city.

Un? What was the matter?

"Meng De, what's this all about?" I quickly asked Meng De who just came by.

"Maa, this can be considered my mistake." Meng De gave a bitter smile, "Didn't we say we were going to Hulao Pass?"

“Yeah.”

“Because Hulao Pass was in a state of disrepair for a long time, it lost its purpose. And so early spring this year, it was merged with another pass and the name and place of Hulao Pass ceased to exist.” Meng De opened her hands, revealing a map. “Unfortunately, the map we were using was last updated a year ago and so naturally we didn’t know of this. After marching for half a day, we only knew this when we asked an old farmer.”

“... And?”

Cold sweat flowed down my back and I swallowed as I awaited Meng De’s reply.

Meng De pointed at the stone tablet on the wall of Sishui Pass and said–

“The merged Pass is now called Sishui Pass! That is to say Hulao Pass– Is Sishui Pass.”

Chapter 14: Don't tell me that the last chapter of volume 1 is the break up of the feudal lord coalition

"After the enemy saw that Sishui Pass was taken, they burnt down Luoyang and kidnapped the Son of Heaven to Chang'an."

(TL: Son of Heaven is another means of saying the emperor. The Chinese, Koreans and Japanese (and probably most other Asian races) all like to proclaim legitimacy for their royal families by claiming lineage from the gods.)

(TL: This is actually what happened in the original. Dong Zhuo fled to Chang'an after Hulao Pass was taken with Lu Bu. Lu Bu slept with a chambermaid that was fancied by Dong Zhuo (in history) or Dong Zhuo's concubine Diao Chan (in fiction), was encouraged to betray Dong Zhuo and was also used as a stress ball by Dong Zhuo. All this ended up pushing Lu Bu to kill Dong Zhuo.)

"Haah?!" During the journey to Luoyang, it was already sweltering hot, and this late piece of news added a big tub of oil onto our rich young mistress Yuan Shao's simmering temper. "If Luoyang is burnt down, then what are we still going there for huh?!"

"Ben Chu, we are almost there already, and we can't just ignore the fire in Luoyang. We must send our troops to put it out. It is, after all, the capital city." Meng De who was close to Yuan Shao quickly said to her. "There is enough time for us to put out the fire before we chase down the enemies who fled to Chang'an."

"Chasing? Still?" Yuan Shao really was feeling insufferable as she spat out

only 2 words in reply before turning to look at the other feudal lords– All of them looked horrible. On seeing this, Yuan Shao let out a sigh of irritation, “Taking Sishui pass took us half a day, finding Hulao Pass took us half a day before we found that we wasted our time, and now that we are finally nearing Luoyang and victory, this happens~~~”

Judging from that, young mistress Yuan Shao doesn’t want to continue the campaign.

“Huh... We still have to go to Chang’an?” Gongsun Zan supported her forehead which was not yet fully healed as she said irritably. “Think about me for once, my home is at You state! The road back home seems so much longer now.”

Be thankful, at least the distance you face is physical. If I want to go home, I have to travel thousands of years.

“My lord, we must seize this opportunity offered to us on this campaign and remember landmarks in this area. When we advance into the Central Plains, it will be useful... My lord, are you even listening?!”

Zi Long was giving useful advice to Gongsun Zan from behind while Gongsun Zan couldn’t be bothered to listen... Ah, Gongsun Zan was reduced to tears again from Zi Long’s scolding... Hai~~~ When will she learn...

“But she’s right in a way, recently all we’ve done is march and it’s really too much.” Han Fu lay down lazily on her horse. She seems to be talking with us a lot recently, “I’d originally wanted to score some merits, but my Pan Feng’s recent form isn’t too good.”

Isn’t he always in bad form then? And it’s not my place to say this, but if you’d used Zhang He more, you would definitely have achieved some merits.

But after listening to them, it looks like not just Yuan Shao but the vast majority of the feudal lords do not wish to march on anymore as the effort and suffering of marching just didn't seem to be worth whatever merits they could achieve. Add to that their being away from their own territories for a while now, being a little homesick is pretty normal.

(TL: Marching is no joke... Especially as an ordinary soldier, you have to carry typically 10-15kg load on you besides your weapon and wear heat trapping kevlar... And you have to remember that in that era, food and water isn't so accessible.)

"... Maa, we will put out the fire... Uncle Sun Jian, I'll leave this colossal task to you."

"Haa?!" Uncle Sun Jian was terribly unwilling. "On what grounds? Every time we go into battle, I'm always leading either the vanguard or the shock troops, and now we have to put out the fire I'm the first to go as well! You, how can you bully someone to this extent?"

"Aiya, uncle Sun Jian. When we meet the Son of Heaven, I'll sing more praises of you then." Yuan Shao quickly tried to placate Sun Jian on hearing his objections.

But everyone knew, that those words were not much more than an empty promise as they weren't even close to the Son of Heaven.

"Hmph, really... I'll go I'll go." Sun Jian couldn't be bothered to argue further and brought his troops out of the main body and sped up towards Luoyang.

"... What sort of attitude is that huh..." Yuan Shao looked at the distant Sun Jian with dissatisfaction, "Little sister, as the one in charge of logistics, don't give him the full amount he has been allocated later."

"I know, big sister." Yuan Shu and her older sister looked at each other and they both gave an evil laughter.

Meng De, who was beside, saw it all but she didn't say a word and only shook her head.

... I feel that this coalition will break up soon.

By the time we reached Luoyang, the fire was almost out.

Though the fire was out, the city could no longer be considered a city. Instead of ruins, it would be more appropriate to call what remained charred soul. Corpses couldn't be seen clearly but there was always a pungent scent of burnt meat that hung about in the air that made one feel disgusted and chilled to the bone. Several feudal lords were even adamantly unwilling to enter the city and set up camp outside.

Those fellows, how could they have burnt something down so thoroughly...

Even though I knew it would be fruitless, I let my little sisters and Feng Xian and the rest see if there were any survivors buried under the wreckage. I, on the other hand, went with Hua Tuo to treat those who'd been saved.

As I predicted, the people they saved were few and most were badly burnt. I'd never thought I'd see such a grotesque sight again after Hua Xiong's death, and the overpowering nausea once again returned.

"Burnt skin cannot heal, if you want to heal it, you need to do skin grafting... But the resources and condition of patients here are too poor, this skin is most likely..." Hua Tuo started tearing as she said so, and she quickly used her arm to wipe them away when she realised it. "Aiya, only at this time am I grateful that my eyesight is poor, or it would be

unbearable to see these peoples' wounds."

Hua Tuo laughed bitterly, and I could feel her deep sense of helplessness as a doctor who could not heal her patients.

"Xuan De, you're here... Where are the rest?"

"Un? It's Meng De... Ah." I stopped short because I saw 2 clear streaks of tears on Meng De's alabaster face... Maa, I won't ask about that. "I let the others go and check if there's anyone trapped."

"Even though you know you probably can't save anyone, you still sent people anyway... Huh? As I expected, we are quite similar." Meng De smiled confidently, though I can't tell if she is faking it.

"You let your people go and search for survivors as well?"

"Why not? In this gargantuan city Luoyang, there should still be survivors out there who need help. Though we may not save anyone, we should probably be able to save someone."

"Maa, that is true... Un? Isn't that uncle Sun Jian?"

Uncle Sun Jian was walking hurriedly towards Yuan Shao's tent, not even bothering to wipe off the ash covering his face.

"Hahaha, look at you..."

Not long after he entered the tent, young mistress Yuan Shao's condescending laughter could be heard.

What sort of attitude was that.

"... Xuan De, let's go listen to what they're saying." Meng De said after pondering for a moment and then pulled me toward the tent by the arm.

"Eh? What's there to listen about?"

Could it be that Meng De has a bad habit of watching people get made fun of?

"No... I just feel that Sun Jian seems a bit suspicious." Meng De walked over to the side of the tent and pressed her ear to the surface. "I just hope I'm thinking too much."

And the moment I pressed my ear to the tent—

"Returning to your hometown because of an illness?" Young mistress Yuan Shao's voice rang out.

Uncle Sun Jian is leaving? ... Now I remember, in history he left because—

"Un, recently I've been constantly tired out, and I really want to return to my daughters."

"Alright, you can leave... But as the coalition leader, I will have you leave behind the jade seal you found."

Jade seal... As expected, Sun Jian found the Imperial Jade Seal while he was putting out the fire at Luoyang when he went on ahead of us.

"What?!! How, how did you know!"

"Of course someone told me... Alright, hand it over quick."

"No way, this is the only loot I've gotten from this campaign! I've already decided to gift it to my daughter when I get back home!!"

... Though it really doesn't matter to me, why is the Imperial Jade Seal being casually treated as a toy?

"A gift for your daughter! How wasteful can you be huh!!"

That's right, young mistress Yuan Shao, please explain it well and good to uncle Sun Jian.

"Let me tell you! That is the Imperial Jade Seal, the jade used to make it should be priceless. Instead of giving it to your daughter and recklessly wasting a gift from the gods, why don't you let me extract some value from it and make some jade bracelets and rings from the jade material."

You're recklessly wasting god's gift as well!!

"A, anyway I've already decided it, no need for anymore words! We'll see who dares to stop me!"

"... Hmph, we'll see how it goes then."

Uncle Sun Jian started stomping out the moment he delivered his angry words... Sounds like he is coming out now.

"Xuan De, let's go." Meng De pulled me to the front of the tent where Sun Jian was mounting his horse. "Wen Tai, you're too hasty. You could have

hid the jade seal first and then leave after everything had passed~~~”

(TL: Wen Tai is Sun Jian's courtesy name.)

“Un? You heard it all? Maa, forget it... Your words make sense but I’m concerned that something might happen with so many feudal lords around.” Uncle Sun Jian broke into a smile as he finished. “Maa, whatever the case, at least I have a souvenir for my daughter when I get back.”

Looks like he really is planning to give it to his daughter..

Sun Jian got ready to leave the moment he finished but I hurriedly stopped him.

“Un? Is there anything Lord Liu Bei?”

“... Umm, though I have no basis for this, I think uncle Sun Jian... No, Lord Sun Jian should not go through Liu Biao’s territory on your way home.”

“Un?” Sun Jian was surprised when he heard me but he broke into a smile as he said, “I know very well what kind of person Liu Biao is. Besides self-preservation, he doesn’t care about anything else. So he won’t do anything to me!”

I had more to say but Sun Jian had already rode off into the distance upon finishing what he had to say.

... I just hope it goes as he says...

“But now that Sun Jian, the only one who knows how to lead the shock troops is gone, what do we do?” I said as I looked at the by now far off

uncle Sun Jian.

These words were directed to both myself and Meng De as I felt she had already predicted and planned for this.

"What to do?" Meng De turned to me and gave a truly bitter smile as she said, "Do nothing."

"Eh?"

Meng De did not explain any further and entered Yuan Shao's tent.

"Based on a reliable source this time, we know that Dong Zhuo is dead already!" On the same night, Yuan Shao gathered the feudal lords and said these farcical words. "This is all thanks to the hard work of everyone here. As for Chang'an, we can leave them be as they will probably destroy themselves. Alright, have a good night's rest and tomorrow we can be all on our way home."

As soon as she finished, the feudal lords could be seen to be brimming with joy. From the very beginning till now, this was the first time they were all in such a good mood. Though they had not attained much in this campaign, finally being able to go home at this point was perhaps a great blessing.

And yet they did not know, that Dong Zhuo was long dead, and that this tenuous coalition had long lost its reason for existence.

"Xuan De, did you hear. Yuan Shao said we can go home already!" Gongsun Zan happily repeated this 'great news' that everyone already knew as she tugged on my sleeve.

"Ah, that really is great." I was too lazy to say much, nor was there any

value in doing so anyway.

"Everyone, I would like to say a few words." Just then, everyone became silent while Meng De smiled as she stood up and raised her wine cup. "From the very beginning, it was my intention to rid our nation of a traitor when I issued a call to arms. And so, I, and the Imperial Court, am both grateful for everyone who was driven to answer my call by your loyalty to the Imperial Court. But truly, the one who has been the most instrumental to our success is not me, but our coalition leader Yuan Shao Yuan Ben Chu."

"Eh? ... Maa, i, it's what I should do anyway." Yuan Shao stammered in response.

"Ben Chu is too humble." Meng De followed up after Yuan Shao and continued. "Now Dong Zhuo is dead. Of course, this result is not independent of everyone's hard work. We have gathered from all corners of the country for the sake of ridding Dong Zhuo together.. At the start, the words 'Dong Zhuo is dead' were on the walls of Sishui Pass. We thought it was a scheme then... Why? Because we had not attained what we had set out to achieve--"

When they heard this, quite a few feudal lords lowered their heads in guilt as they felt that they had been thoroughly read.

"What we want- Is not something as simple as Dong Zhuo's death. We want a stable Imperial Court and a peaceful nation." ... Meng De stopped to catch her breath, "Am I right to say this, everyone?"

This time, everyone seemed relieved that their ugly ulterior motives were not seen through and smiled as they went 'right, right.'

"... Maa forget it, I said a bit too much but let me finish this with a toast! Everyone, please!" Meng De raised her head and downed her cup in one go as soon as she finished.

I followed suit as well and raised my cup... Ha~~~~ This liquor was strong enough, unlike the one I had in Zhuo commandery.

The majority however, left their cups untouched and just sat where they were motionlessly.

"Ha~~~~... I'm a little tipsy and will be excusing myself first." After finishing her drink alone, Meng De exited the tent.

Meng De had left, but there was no cheer whatsoever in the tent.

"... Maa, maa, it's not getting any earlier so let's head off to bed." Yuan Shao gave a few dry laughs and dispersed the feudal lords on seeing the awkward atmosphere.

I exited the tent and looked for Meng De, who was already preparing to leave.

"Meng De, you're..."

"There are still the remnants of Dong Zhuo's forces in Chang'an so I'm bringing my own troops to save the Son of Heaven." Meng De said as she mounted her horse.

"... You persuaded Yuan Shao to break up the coalition when you went to find her."

"Un, there's no way the Son of Heaven can be saved with the feudal lords who will only hold me back ." Meng De said mercilessly. "In any case, farewell. I believe we will meet again."

I looked at Meng De and I saw that her usually confident smile was slightly diminished.

"Maa, I think so too."

Meng De merely chuckled in reply before she rode off and brought her own troops, which weren't all that many, out of the west gate, in the direction of Chang'an.

By the time we woke up the next day, most of the feudal lords had already left. Though it's natural that nobody would want to stay for long.

Gongsun Zan had offered to let me go with her earlier. Though it was a good idea, I still felt that You state was a little far and had no choice but to part with Gongsun Zan.

As they left. Zi Long was muttering things like 'Ahh~~~ What a waste, if only it were Lord Xuan De' or 'My lord, please learn from him' and so on... Which made me feel that Gongsun Zan was really pitiful.

The person herself on the other seemed unperturbed by this and was still happily calling out to me as she left, "Bye bye~~~ My childhood friend~~~~"

... Maa, she is a naturally big hearted person, to the point where she can accept everything that comes.

And so we began to pack and get ready to leave thereafter.

"Lord Xuan De, we're almost done." Feng Xian walked over as she pulled the Red Hare along with her injured arm.

"Un, I got it... Eh? You haven't left?" I asked.

"Eh? Leave... Why?" She seemed surprised at my question.

"What I meant was, you don't need to follow me anymore." I calmly explained. "The coalition is no more and the trainwreck is over. The shadows cast by Ding Yuan and Dong Zhuo's deaths should have dissipated by now and you can follow your own *raison d'être* from now on."

Though our time together was short, I keenly understood that Feng Xian was different from the Lu Bu Lu Feng Xian I knew before. Feng Xian enjoyed a good fight but she also loved peace, and was an upright person; she was brave and fierce in combat but also had a cute side to her.

Even though this is just me saying it, I am more than willing to acknowledge her as the real Lu Bu.

"What is Lord Xuan De saying? Isn't my *raison d'être* right here?" Feng Xian said as a matter of factly, upon which Zhang Liao smiled from behind. "Moreover, Zhang Liao has been speaking of a lot of good things about Lord Xuan De recently."

"Eh? ... But." I was at a loss as to what to do on hearing Feng Xian's words.

"As for myself, I too feel that staying with Lord Xuan De is better, that I can truly see the world for what it is as long as I'm at Lord Xuan De's side."

Feng Xian said as she looked straight at me with resolute eyes. Although I really cannot meet the glance of such a beautiful girl head on.

.... Hai, they really think too highly of me.

"Maa, since you're willing to follow me, I don't have any objections."

"... Many thanks, Lord Xuan De." Feng Xian said. Upon finishing she prepared to kneel down but I quickly rushed forward to stop her.

"Eh eh eh! Don't need to be so formal about it..." The one who should be grateful is me.

"And so Lord Xuan De is now my lord's lord." Zhang Liao seemed to be very happy as well. "From now on, I'll have lots of time to chat with my bosom friend."

Bosom friend? Yun Chang?

"My bosom friend, I must say, your lord has indeed made the right choice." Yun Chang nodded with a look of satisfaction as she spoke to Zhang Liao. "Big brother may not have much of a name now but I'm sure he will achieve great things in the times to come."

... What's with this pressure?

"And so, we now formally have another 2 members huh?" Yi De said as she counted with her fingers.

"Eh? Eh? Which 2? Is it Lord Pan Feng and Lord Han Fu?" Hua Tuo squinted and looked about.

"It's a good thing they're gone."

If those 2 joined us, that would be bad.

But speaking of members, members of what? ... Maa, never mind, if I ask, they'll probably tell me a bunch of incomprehensible things.

(TL: Your harem duh. Yun Chang even brainwashed Zhang Liao so all you needed to do was to focus on Feng Xian.)

Seeing them happily discussing away, I took out the feather fan.

Before I knew it, it had been a while since I've been here but I still have no clue on how to go back home...

Maa, I'll leave future matters to the future. As I said at the very beginning, now is not yet the time for me to stop.

"Alright, let us get going." I said as I kept the feather fan and clapped to get their attention.

And Yi De, Yun Chang, Hua Tuo (Zhang Jue), Feng Xian, Zhang Liao looked at each other before laughing and facing me with a helpless smile-

"Go where?!~~~~~"

Haha, what a recurrent problem.

I too was infected by their laughter and smiled as I gave the reply I always did.

"Who knows?! Walk first think later!"

Afterword

Does everyone know? While I was writing this volume, my .TXT filename was always 'Pit Story'. That is to say, I hadn't even planned on finishing volume 1 then.

(TL: The mainland Chinese like to call stories that take very long to update or not at all 'Pit Stories' or 'Pit Books' because the translator or writer has dug a pit, lured the readers and then left them there.)

The original plan was to post a teaser of this into the <Han Hua Zhi> page and see how it would go. But by the time I finished the first chapter, I realised I'd exceeded 3,000 words.

(TL: Han Hua Zhi is another work of the author, his maiden work I believe.)

Thereafter I decided to go all the way and submit a new work not knowing that I wouldn't be able to stop.

In this period, I've done almost nothing but write. Thanks to that, my head hurts and my legs are all soft. Finally, after one week, volume 1 is done.

At the beginning, I really felt that this series wouldn't be popular. Three Kingdoms is after all old and overused material, and derivative works always give the feeling of plagiarism. Which is why when I write, I always write in a lighthearted and fun mood. For the me that delivers a work with such a lighthearted attitude to my readers, I truly deserve to be stabbed a thousand times.

Honestly though, this week has been exhausting. And now my father has

signed me up for hateful English tuition so I probably can't update everyday. Moreover, I am a high school senior so I'm always tired out after school, so please understand.

But is being a high school senior excuse enough? No.

So I shall most irresponsibly (oi!) promise that for this novel and all others that they won't become pits, just irregular updates. ('World' is probably a pit though. But the setting is still there and I might write another story using that.)

Does everyone know? When I finished the last chapter of this volume, I finally changed the file name of this .TXT file to 'Don't tell me this is the true history of the Three Kingdoms Volume 1'; and I opened a new file called 'Don't tell me this is the true history of the Three Kingdoms Volume 2'.

Extra Story: Don't tell me this is a hot springs special chapter

"Wa~~~ Is this for real?"

My jaw dropped in disbelief as I looked at the natural hot spring spouting out from the ground which Meng De had brought me to.

"Of course it's real, 100%." Meng De spoke to me as she oversaw the soldiers who were building bathing facilities for everyone. "Though we didn't find Hulao Pass, I did find this hot spring on the way back as we neared Sishui Pass. Seeing everyone's somber moods, I thought that this might be a good way to boost everyone's morale."

"Hai~~~~~"

Meng De had told the news of this hot spring to a very angry Yuan Shao early in the morning when the combined army came back to Sishui Pass with black faces. Upon hearing it, young mistress Yuan Shao's mood improved greatly, and Meng De was allowed to bring troops to build the necessary facilities.

"But you really are good huh, to be able to find such a thing."

"Maa, it's true that springs in general are uncommon on the plains but there's a rule to finding them." Meng De smiled as she said so. "Another 4 hours and it will be ready, so we can enjoy it come night-time."

Being able to bathe is indeed a good thing. Ever since we left Anxi county, we have been on the road and have had no time to bathe at all.

I returned ahead of the rest to Sishui Pass, and the moment I entered the tent, all the young women gathered in front of me to ask me about the hot springs.

Though they might not know what a hot spring is, they do know that it is something related to bathing.

"Big brother, how is the construction going?" Yi De was first to ask me.

"They said it would be done soon, and after we finish dinner, the generals can go."

"Un, we've been on the road all the time recently. There's a funny smell on me already, and it's time I had a good bath." Yun Chang said happily.

Funny smell... is it? I wonder how Yun Chang's funny smell smells like... No no no, why am I behaving like a pervert!!

(TL: If there's one thing I like about this series, it's that the MC doesn't go all 'but she's family to me!')

"But there are 18 feudal lords, so there must be quite a number of generals. How are we going to have a good bath with so many~~~" Zhang Liao said with concern... Zhang Liao always shows her girly side in the most surprising times.

But she's right, when the time comes, it will definitely be packed. Though I don't really mind, girls definitely prefer it if it's less crowded.

"I think going in the middle of the night will work." Feng Xian said as she raised her left index finger to her lips. "There shouldn't be many people at that time."

"Eh~~~ But then it'll be hard for me to wake up~~~"

"Me too~~~"

Yi De and Hua Tuo voiced their objections but everyone silences them with the answer 'We will wake you' and so Feng Xian's suggestion passed.

From this moment forth, all the young women awaited for the coming of night.

As expected, there was a loud commotion coming from the feudal lords and generals who raced at full speed to get to the hot springs while we ate.

Just half an hour after we began dinner, the commotion had died down.

Of course, not just any general could enter the hot spring. I was an exception, as only higher ranked generals could enter.

"Ku ku ku, they are just like idiots. Perhaps it's like a can of sardines now inside." Yi De said lazily as she ate. "One more bowl~~"

"Lord Yi De, don't say it like that. We all want to have a good hot bath earlier." Hua Tuo said with a helpless smile as she scooped rice for Yi De. "Oi oi, Lord Yi De, don't eat too much. When the time comes and you have a stomachache, you can't go in."

"Un? Come to think of it, you're right. Then I'll just eat half my usual and endure my hunger." Yi De said and then proceeded to demolish the bowl of rice from Hua Tuo.

Half your usual? But you're already at your 5th bowl...

Though she wasn't big, her appetite was definitely not small, so where does the nutrition all go?

"Lord Hua Tuo, do you have any food I can feed Red Hare with?" The Red Hare that was in Feng Xian's arms was probably hungry and was barking profusely.

"A dog, is it? Un, I do have something... As expected it should be meat or rice." Hua Tuo said as she took out a piece of skin from her bowl. "Come, let's see if Red Hare eats this."

(TL: Yes dogs can eat rice.)

"Un..." Feng Xian put down Red Hare on the floor and Hua Tuo dangled the piece of skin before Red Hare as she watched its reaction. "... Doesn't seem interested."

"So Red Hare doesn't like skin like me..."

So it's because you don't like eating it!!

"... How about giving it some carrots? It's called Red Hare after all." I joked.

Everyone gave me a 'What the heck are you taking about huh~~' expression but Feng Xian followed through on my suggestion without thinking.

— Red Hare actually ate it... This world has gone bonkers.

(TL: Dogs actually can eat carrots.)

"It actually ate it, even though I don't like carrots." Hua Tuo got depressed for a weird reason.

That's not the problem here.

"Oh~~~~" Feng Xian was fascinated as she looked at the Red Hare who was eating the carrot, her expression now was probably the same as mine when I saw the hot spring. "Would it eat white carrots... What about red carrots?" She said unwittingly.

"My lord, please don't retrieve more carrots... Please wake up, even if it is a rabbit, it can't just eat carrots." Zhang Liao Quickly stopped the Feng Xian who was on her way out... Looks like she got a bit too obsessed with carrots.

"Maa, we should prepare our clothes we are going to change into now to save time later." Yun Chang said as she took out her belongings.

"Un, that makes sense. I'll go prepare too."

Everyone went to find their clothes as they followed Yun Chang's suggestion. As for me, just this will do... But speaking of which, the females of this era... No no no, I'm not thinking about any red bellyband or whatever!!

(TL: Ancient Chinese female underwear was only this red thing that looks like an apron. You can Google it, I can't put a link here as it isn't very safe for work.)

I stopped my thinking there and concentrated on eating instead,

Thought I don't particularly desire to enter the hot springs, at least not to the same extent as Yun Chang and the rest, I felt happy seeing them have a chance to relax and enjoy the hot springs.

It was going to be midnight soon, and those who had been to the hot spring should all have returned by now. We felt that it was the right time and woke Yi De and Hua Tuo up before sneaking to the city gate.

When we reached the gate, we found that it was unlocked, probably a precautionary measure in case people spent too long in the hot springs.

I waved to everyone to let them know it was all clear and all of us slipped through. Only after we exited the Pass did we relax.

"But really, now that I think about it, do we really have to sneak about like this?" Zhang Liao, who seemed to be in a slightly bad mood about it, asked.

"Maa, what we're doing isn't actually proper." I explained. "Everyone had to squeeze and queue for a long while before they got to bathe and there was even a time limit. We came here in the night to enjoy a long soak in the spacious hot springs. In a way, that isn't quite right."

"Aiya! Don't bother about such things now, the mission at hand is to soak in hot springs." Yi De said irritably.

That was right though. We'd come out already anyway, so no point in thinking so much about it.

As we walked on, the first thing that appeared before us was a wooden wall with a door at the side. When we walked to the door, we saw that there was an intersection and on the left, there was a '女' sign, while on

the right, there was a '男' sign. And at the side, there was a notice that said "20 people maximum at any time." These words... Should be from Meng De given the exact number and the way it is written.

(TL: I think everyone should know what those characters are. But just in case, 女 is woman or female and 男 is man or male.)

"Oh~~~ I can already feel the steam~~~" Yi De said loudly.

"Yes, but there seems to be a weird smell..." Yun Chang frowned as she sniffed the air.

"Ah, it's just the smell of sulphur. It's normal." Hua Tuo explained to Yun Chang... Hua Tuo sure knows quite a bit huh.

"My lord, are you certain that you want to bring Red Hare in?"

"Un, is there a problem?"

"... No, I just hope you stand further from me while you're carrying it... Really."

Feng Xian had brought Red Hare along, and was probably planning on giving it a bath and Zhang Liao isn't too enthusiastic about it.

"Let's go in instead of standing around the entrance."

Though we had tons more to chat about, everyone excited raised their hands and gave an "Oh!~~~~" in reply.

I went right and entered the changing room. Though I called it a

changing room, it was nothing more than several lines of nails. I hung all my clothes on one nail before heading inside.

The door opened with a sharp *kelala* and the hot springs appeared before me.

The perimeter of the hot springs itself was lined with smooth rocks but there really was nothing besides the hot springs.

It's worth mentioning that the design of the hot springs should allow for one to cross over between the female and male sections but there was a wooden wall in between which probably extended underwater as well.

If only there was shampoo... Though I can't really voice out such complaints to anyone but myself.

I dipped my foot into the water, and found the temperature to be bearable, before I lowered my whole body into the water.

"Ah~~~ It's a little too hot to bathe in, but it's perfect as a hot spring~~~"

I would never have thought that I would have my first hot springs experience in the era of the Three Kingdoms. Though it didn't give me the luxurious feeling I had always imagined, it did give me a strange sense of satisfaction.

"Wa!! Little sister where do you think you are touching?!"

"Big sister, why are you asking when you know full well? What I'm touching is of course- Your breasts."

"Aiya! Stop it!"

... Un, lo, looks like the noise cancellation is poor, as the sounds of Yun Chang and Yi De could be heard loud and clear,

"But really, " Hua Tuo's voice, "No matter if it's Lord Yun Chang, Lord Feng Xian or Lord Zhang Liao, what do you have to eat to grow until they become like that huh?"

"Un~~~ Nothing special really... Don't worry, when you all grow up, they will grow together with you."

"That is as good as not saying anything!!"

"Actually having big breasts has its demerits, like how they get in the way when you are swinging a weapon... Ah, Red Hare don't run too far."

... No matter the era, female topics always have that huh~~~~

But speaking of which, am I really going to be the only one here? ... Though that means I can soak in the hot springs for as long as I want, it does feel a bit lonely.

"Oi!! Why are you soaking in the womens' side!!"

Maa, I'll just treat it as my personal hot springs."

"Oi!! I'm talking about you there!!"

"- Puwa~~~"

A wooden tub came crashing down on my head and I let out a cry as I was forcefully plunged into the pool... Ah, someone has grabbed my arms from behind me—

“— Uo... Ah *ke* *ke*.,, Ah *ke*.” All of a sudden, the one who held my arms from behind me pulled me out of the water, which made me swallow a fair bit. “*ke* *ke*... you, what are you doing...”

I forced my eyes open, and when I saw my assailant, I was speechless.

“Don’t blame me for being heavy-handed, you didn’t even listen to me at all!! Anyway, what I want to tell you is, this is the female side so please get out!”

“Wo!!! Woman!!” I stammered and my eyes bulged and I did not know where to look.

“Yes, that’s right. I’m a girl and this is the female side, how many times do you want me to say that huh!”

Yes, a silver haired girl was standing buck naked before me. What was scary was that she was grabbing on to my shoulders and was physically extremely close to me who was naked as well. On her face was not a shred of shyness, but rather she had a look of righteousness, as though she were embarking on a mission with justice on her side.

“Wh, what? Fe, female side?!” This made me terribly confused. “Bu, but when I came in, I clearly saw that it was...”

“What do you mean? Are you saying I got it wrong huh?!!”

“I’m begging you please don’t shake me anymore. Those things on your

chest have been hitting me the entire time, do you have any feeling at all?!"

"Ku... You, you pervert!" She only just realised this and she let go of me as she stepped back and hugged her chest shyly. "Alright, I'll go and take a look and if it's the female side, I won't forgive you."

As soon as she finished, she ran out leaving me sitting irritatedly in the pool.

This... What the heck is this–

"I'm back."

"Fast!!" I hadn't even finished my monologue yet... "And the result is..."

"... I'm letting you off, this is indeed the male side." At least she understood but why was she still naked...

Really, how could you not take a look at the sign when you're coming in.

"That's what I said, I definitely didn't see it wrongly." I moved my eyes away, "But stop staying here already and go over to the female side."

"Ah, about that..." She suddenly withdrew her shyness and returned to how she was at the start... Which made me feel like a standoff had begun. "It's alright, this has now become the female side so the one who should get out is you."

"... Haa!?"

"Un? Looks like you still have questions? Alright, I'll answer all of them before you get out." She said, and went ahead to sit in the pool. "Ah~~~ ... I switched the '男' and '女' signs just now, so this is the female side."

"..." I quietly listened to the end, and took some time to try and make sense of what she just said but, "What the fuck! Why would you even do that!!"

"Because I am justice. And justice is never changing and never wrong."

"You are chuuni alright? It's not called justice alright?!"

"You, what are you saying?! Are you humiliating me?" Seems like I pushed a button I should not have as I could feel a suffocating aura from her. "You get out of here right--"

"Hu~~~ As expected no one is around at this time huh~~~~ Lord Gongsun you really are smart."

Just then, several voices could be heard from the changing room.

"Maa maa, Lord Han Fu need not praise me so much. Zi Long deserves quite a bit of merit for this idea as well, right?"

"My lord, winking at me is of no use. The suggestion to come in the middle of the night was mine, why did you have to add 'quite a bit of' huh?"

"Uuu... Zi Long is a bully..."

"Lord Gongsun, as a subordinate of another feudal lord, it may not be right for me to say this but in such a situation, saying the truth is a better choice."

"If you know it's not right, then don't say it. Zhang He, you always say things people don't like to hear... I really don't understand the one who recommended you to me."

From those voices, it should be Han Fu and Gongsun Zan's groups... I didn't think they would come in the middle of the night as well...

"Kuh... Quickly get out!! If they see a man and woman in here alone... Ah!! Get out quick!"

"Oi oi oi! This happened all because you went ahead and switched the signs, no?!" I retorted in a low voice, "And I can't go to other side now right?! There are quite a few girls over there!"

Yi De and the rest are over there after all.

... Un? But if Han Fu is here, then—

— Yaa~~

— Uwa!!!!

I first heard Yun Chang and Zhang Liao's screams before a string of beating sounds and the cries of a man coming from the right side of the hot springs.

Pan Feng, rest in peace. But you must know that you have not actually done anything wrong. You were merely collateral damage for justice.

"I don't care about all that, just get out quick!" The girl seemed to ignore

the sounds and kept insisting on a course of action for me that I could not possibly follow through on.

“How am I supposed to get out! They’re already at the door..”

— The sound of footsteps drew close.

“Aiya!!! There’s no other way now!”

“Un? Oi! Why are you coming over?! Stop...”

She completely ignored my protests and covered my mouth while she herded me to a corner of the pool using her body weight to push me along.

This time, as the door opened with a *kelala*, a number of girls came in.

“Quickly lower your body...”

Hai, though I still have a lot I want to object to... Now is not the time to do so.

But... This girl’s back is completely sticking to my body already!

“Lord Han Fu, why did I seem to hear Lord Pan Feng’s voice just now?”

“Un? He’s probably just surprised by the hot water.. So hot! I’m not very used to water that’s this hot.”

No, I think he got beaten up by Yun Chang and the rest.

"That's right, I don't really dare to enter the water myself."

"My lord, it is best if you hurry and enter, If you can't even handle this bit of hot water then don't even bother about achieving anything in future."

"Wa, wait wait, don't grab me Zi Long, I, I, I'll get- So hot!!!"

"Whether it's my lord or Lord Gongsun, why are you all acting like children... Ah~~~ This feels so good, this temperature is just right."

"Ah~~~ It does feel good indeed, almost as though all my muscles are relaxing... My lord you really must learn from Lord Zhang He, to be able to enjoy this hot water- Eh?! Is there someone over there?"

Ah! We got found out by Zi Long!

"Ah, ah! I'm here."

The girl blocking me from view responded in a very stiff voice as she raised her hand as well.

"A-re? There's someone here already?"

"Oh~~~ I didn't think that there would be someone who would make such an astute choice as us."

"Can't see very clearly~~~ Oi! Come on over and join us."

“Ah...” As expected, the last line was from the harebrained Gongsun Zan to which the girl waves her arms, “No no no no, don’t need to mind me, I’m good over here.”

“Bu, but...”

“Really, it’s okay, it’s okay. I feel like I can relax over here!”

“Haa... Since you say it like that...”

Hu~~~ Finally gave up...

— Ouch!!

The girl hit my waist.

(What are you doing huh!!)

(I can’t anymore, quickly get out!!)

(I already said I can’t! Especially now that everyone is inside!!)

(Just... 4 people, can’t you think of something?)

(4 people? Even 1 is a stretch, much less 4!)

(Eh! So useless! Just keep soaking here then!)

Why are you getting angry at me over this...

It's over, does this mean I have to soak here till these people are done?

But I hadn't entered too long before them, and Han Fu and Gongsun Zan are not used to it... Un, I think I can do it.

Wa~~ No, my desires are making my eyes look towards them, and the girl in front of me is fully in my field of vision so I can't not look. If this goes on, blood is going to keep rushing into my head!

Endure~ I must endure~~~~

— Just when I was thinking about this.

The door opened yet again with a *kelala* which jolted my heart to my throat.

"Eh? Yun Chang and everyone else, you've all come too!" Gongsun Zan said surprisedly.

"Oh, you all are here too." Yun Chang replied. "Maa, it was Feng Xian who suggested to come at this time."

"But we actually came here much earlier! But for some reason, we actually entered the male side from the very beginning!" Yi De's outraged voice could be heard. "Even though I clearly remember that it said '女' back then..."

"Un, I think so too, what do you think Red Hare?"

Wang!

"We'd thought that Lord Pan Feng had made a mistake when he walked in but who knew that Lord Sun Jian would come in as well." Zhang Liao said. "And so we went out and took a look at the sign and it really was '男!'"

"I feel sorry for Lord Pan Feng and will see if I can return his head and body back to normal later."

Could it be his head is no longer attached to his body?! That's... That's murder!!

"Oh~~~ Isn't this Pan Feng? How come I never saw you before... Oi! What happened to you?! Why is your head turned to your back!!"

Uncle Sun Jian's voice could be heard from the other side... Though it wasn't what I thought, but that's bad enough...

"... Lord Pan Feng should be alright, right."

"Zhang He, you've been working with Pan Feng for quite some time now, so you should know that for my Pan Feng who is strong and sturdy beyond comparison, such a small injury is nothing more than a massage."

(TL: Pan Feng is the subject of a Chinese internet meme involving a line from the novel, "Here's one of my best men, Pan Feng. He can destroy Hua Xiong." only to be destroyed by Hua Xiong shortly after. This meme has led to a surge in Pan's popularity to rival the more well-known figures of the Three Kingdoms.)

Where is this confidence coming from...

"Speaking of which, where is big brother? Was he not here? Seems like he came in here without checking as well."

I know what led to everything, but yet I can't say anything now...

"We didn't see him~~~" If you did, I'd be screwed!! "Could Xuan De have gone back first?"

"Maybe he felt it was too hot and went back first."

I'm not you!

"Maa, whatever the case, just come on in first."

"Un."

Oi oi oi!! The number of people increased! Does this mean we have to stay here for even longer now?!

"Un~~~~"

"Un? Yi De, what are you looking at huh? With such lecherous eyes too."

"Maa... In any case, I'm the same as Hua Tuo, Lord Han Fu and Lord Gongsun Zan."

"Un, Lord Yi De, what kind of categorisation is this!"

"Isn't it obvious? Of course it's about breasts."

Why are they back to this topic again? And this time, I'm in the same side as them! My curiosity is threatening to get the better of me!

Just one look should be fine... No no no, endure~~~

"Oh~~~ That's right. My lord is still a child physically speaking."

"Though that is the truth, but why do I feel like crying when Zi Long says it like that?"

"Maa, Lord Gongsun Zan, don't cry, we can still grow."

"Lord Han Fu~~~"

"Lord Gongsun Zan~~~"

A strange friendship seems to have been born...

But this isn't the time to be thinking about this—

(Oi! What do we do now? ... Un?)

(Ahaa... Ahaa... This is...)

(Oi! Oi! Don't faint now!)

I only just noticed that this girl was panting and seemed like she was about to faint, probably due to low blood sugar.

What do we do now? If we don't get out soon, things will be bad...

And what are you going to do if you faint and they start talking to you?!

"Oi, the person over there." Whatever I thought actually happened!! And why is it Gongsun Zan again? She really is the overly familiar type huh. "Let me introduce you, this is Guan Yu Guan Yun Chang, this is... Un? Oi, you don't look too good..."

!!

"Un? What's the matter?"

As soon as Gongsun Zan finished, I could hear the sound of many people walking over.

It's over, it really is over now!

As these thoughts raced through my head, I held the girl's back so she didn't fall into the water. I also lowered my head as much as I could, so that the nearing Gongsun Zan could not see me.

Now, I could keenly feel it, that Gongsun Zan was standing in front of the girl.

"Oi—" Gongsun Zan was about to shake the girl's shoulders as she called out, and at this critical time—

"Un? Everyone's here huh. Even though it's so late already!!"

A single voice drew everyone's attention away from the girl.

"Lord Cao Cao?!"

"Why did you come at this time too?"

"I didn't think there would be so many smart people!"

"My lord, I think you aren't one of them."

"Zhang He, you talk too much!"

... Hu~~~~ Looks like Meng De has arrived... But at least this will temporarily draw away everyone's attention.

"That's right, Lord Cao Cao. Did you see my big bro... Lord Xuan De?" Yun Chang asked.

"Un? Xuan De is it? I didn't, why?"

"At the very beginning when we came together, we both entered the wrong sides but later when we came over to the right side, big brother seems to have left already."

"Entered the wrong side?" These words seem to have caught Meng De's attention. "... Actually, I was suspicious about this as well, as I was the one who hung the signs and I clearly remember that this should be the male side and the other side should be the female side..."

"Oh?! That's right that's right! We seemed to have seen it like that too."

Wang!

"Un... Un? What's wrong with that person?"

It's over!! Even Meng De has noticed us!

"She seems to have entered before any of us. But now she's a little weird, and her face is very red as well."

"Oh? ~~~ She's just faint from soaking too long then... Un? You were saying that Xuan De left earlier..."

"Un? Faint?! Then we should hurry and carry her..." Zi Long made her way over as she said so.

Everything is over!!

"... Ah, everybody don't move!" Meng De suddenly said, stopping Zi Long who was about to touch the girl. Everyone looked towards Meng De who continued, "Just leave her there for now, if we casually move her, there will be even more trouble to be had."

... What did she mean by that? Could it be that Meng De knows?!

"But..."

"Maa maa, it's alright." I could really imagine how Meng De's smile looks like now. "Speaking of which, we can still go to the other side since I saw Sun Jian carrying someone out already. From what I remember, this is definitely the male side."

"But when we came in, the sign clearly said '女'?" Zi Long was still grappling with the issue.

"Maa, it could have been anything. Perhaps someone switched the signs, though that isn't very likely."

... Meng De, you are too good!!

"In any case, let's go over. Just a few hours ago, many unknown men soaked in these waters. Don't you all think that's a little disgusting?"

"..."

Though no one said a single word, I could hear everyone promptly exit the hot springs and head for the exit.

Good, good, just go out like that.

"But what about that girl? Do we just leave her there like that?" Hua Tuo asked with concern just before she left. "Soaking for too long isn't good for the body."

"Maa, don't worry." Meng De said meaningfully- "There'll be someone who will carry her out."

!!

Just as I got a shock from her words, the girls all walked out and the door shut with a *kelala*. At the same time I could hear Meng De say 'Don't forget to switch back the signs.'

“... Aha–” Only a little while after that did I dare to stick my head out and take a deep breath. “I, I’m saved...”

I really didn’t think, that one could guess that I was here just by those bits and pieces of information... Meng De, I owe you one.

If it’s now, it should be safe but I must fulfill my responsibility to carry this faint girl out. Really, what should have been a relaxing hot springs experience has been completely ruined.

But come to think of it, who is she? I really have no impression of her at all.

As I thought so I lifted her by putting my arm around her armpits.

Eh, I really don’t know where I can touch her... What soft arms... Eh? Isn’t this texture that!!!

I quickly shifted my hold and nearly dropped her into the water.

After quite a bit of effort, I was finally able to pull her into the changing room. There was a faint light here and no steam so there was a greater need to control my evil desires and not look at her.

But it’s not like I can just leave her lying around like this... And I can’t help her put on her clothes either...

“... Un.” The girl let out a soft voice between her weak breaths.

Oh~~~ Finally awake huh.

“Oi. Oi, wake up!” I gently slapped her face.

Under my stimulation, she slowly opened her eyes...

“Un... Un?! What are you doing?! Why are you pressing down on my body!”

“I’m not... Ah.”

I stopped my protest halfway as I realised that though it didn’t seem like anything from my point of view, from her’s, it was as though I was pressing down on her.

“Yo-yo-you, what did you do while I was unconscious?!”

“I didn’t do any... Ouch!~” Before I could finish, she started hitting me in a frenzy, and her strength wasn’t to be scoffed at! I could only endure the pain and continue speaking, “I really didn’t do anything! In any case, just quickly put on your clothes first–”

I got ready to stand up as I finished– But I never knew that there would be others who would mistake the sign like this girl did.

“M... My lord, th, this side isn’t the fe... Female...”

“Tian Feng, why do you always stammer when you speak. If you have something to say then say it properly...”

Eh?

I turned back to look, just in time to see Yuan Shao pull open the curtains

and stare right at me and the girl, both of us still in full nude while I was still on top of her, as she stood stock still.

There actually were more people who would make this mistake?!!

“My, my lord? What did you see... Ya!!”

Feng Tian who was behind Yuan Shao began screaming... No good, got to run!

And as I thought so, I quickly carried the girl along.

(Ya! What are you doing! Let go of me!)

(Don't speak!)

I covered my face and snatched our clothes off the nails before charging past Yuan Shao's group as I bent my body low.

“Ya~~~ Don't come here!! Pervert! Get away from me!” Yuan Shao closed her eyes and waved her folding fan at me in a panic when she saw me charging over.

I did a feint, and went the other side about young mistress Yuan Shao and Tian Feng and sprinted out of the hot springs, not letting up on the pace till I saw the city gate. Only when I turned and saw that there was no one did I heave a sigh of relief.

I wonder if Yuan Shao saw our faces... She shouldn't have, as the light was rather dim.

“Oi!”

“Un? ... Ouch!” On hearing the girl’s unhappy call, I turned around to see what she wanted only to be greeted by a fist to me face.

“I, idiot, I’m not done wearing my clothes yet!”

“Then you have said so! Why do you always have to resort to violence!”

That punch made me falter for a bit and by the time I recovered and looked back, she had deftly put in her clothes.

“... Maybe I did overdo it today.” The girl said as she swung her face away from me. “But don’t think that I’ll apologise!”

“Maa, I never did expect anything.”

Though I still had a lot of grievances, saying them all now would just be a waste of time.

“But thanks for today. Though the main cause was you, you did help hide me behind you so nobody would see me.”

If we were to be found out, I’d probably meet with a worse fate than comrade Pan Feng.

“Wh... Don’t misunderstand! I, I was just afraid that it might not be good if people saw me... What are you smirking about huh?!”

“Un? Ah, it’s nothing.” Was I smiling? I touched my face and found that I was indeed smiling. “I just feel that tonight’s adventure was simply too

amusing.”

“Amusing adventure!! What sort description is that!!” As she said so, the girl smiled as well for some reason. “In any case, I’ll head back first... Ah, th, the thing about changing signs, you better not tell anyone!!”

... So she does get scared huh.

“Un, I won’t say it.”

Maa, though this whole thing has been ridiculous from start to finish, if I say it out, it will only get worse.

“Oh... Thank you.”

“Eh? What?”

I seemed to have heard some words of gratitude from her.

“No, nothing!! I... I’m going back!”

She didn’t wait for a reply, and jogged toward the city after she finished.

Ah, I never did get her name... Maa, it doesn’t really matter anyway.

“How was it? Your fun time last night?”

“Eh? Fun time?”

When I woke up the next morning, I coincidentally ran into Meng De who gave me a knowing smile the moment she saw me.

"Don't need to put up an act. Though no one else know what happened in the hot springs, I do." Meng De flicked her hair back and folded her arms as she continued with one eye closed. "You weren't there, and that unknown girl's actions were weird. Add to that the switched sign. With all this, how could I not have seen through it all?"

... Is that so. I'd thought that she only knew I was behind the girl. To think she even knew that the girl was the one who switched the signs.

"Maa, as expected of Meng De, to know even this."

"Un, I understand full well. The girls around you could no longer satisfy your desires so you found a new one. But even then it wasn't enough for you so you 2 decided to switch the signs while you hid behind her and be a voyeur."

"... Haah?!" On hearing Meng De's mistaken analysis, I could not help but be shocked. "Though you are right on some parts... But you are wrong on the rest!! There was not one moment during the incident that I had the chance to control the flow of events at all..."

"Yes, and that's also how you almost got found out."

"That is true, but..."

"And so I resolved your conundrum, but I also didn't let you continue your voyeurism."

"I really am thankful to you for that, but I have never thought of..."

"But just as I thought, though your voyeurism was unsuccessful, you could still.. Have a shot with that girl right."

"That's completely wrong, alright? We didn't do anything thereafter, and I don't even know her.. But Meng De, your face is really red now."

"Un, I'll leave it at that then... But did you say that my face is red?" She seemed a little flustered and turned around as she touched her face.

What's with leaving it at that, it really is just that.

"Ah, that's right." Meng De seemed to have thought of something all of a sudden. "Ben Chu seems to have went to the hot springs late in the night as well. And she also went into the wrong side and seems to have seen... *Ahem*, maa, I heard she wants to reinforce discipline in the coalition army, so you best not do anyone for the time being."

"I already said I didn't do anything or anyone!! It was just a misunderstanding!"

It's over, just one sin can ruin a lifetime of virtuous deeds.

"Oh by the way, that girl seems to be the daughter of Ma Teng from West Liang. After the coalition is over, you probably won't ever meet her again. Though it's a pity, it can't be helped."

Ma Teng's daughter!

"Maa, this isn't something that is a pity."

But now that I think about it, that girl is actually a good person. Though

she is a bit too stubborn and ditzy, and when you consider her chuunibyou, these are all probably factors which will lead to her having a notorious reputation in future huh~~~~

"Big brother, where did you go last night. Why did you leave after just a short bath?"

"Ah, it's nothing."

After I came back, everyone questioned me on last night which I deflected with ambiguous answers. Though they had their suspicions, they still let it go anyway.

As for that girl, it probably won't be like as Meng De said, and I believe we will meet again in future,

Right, Ma Meng Qi?

(TL: Meng Qi is the courtesy name of Ma Chao, one of Liu Bei's '5 Tiger Generals'.)